A Short History Of The Revivalist Movement in Islam

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TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

The English Edition of *Tajdid–o–Ihya–i–Din,* a great work by Maulana Abul A'la Maududi, is before the reader. This wonderful book was originally published as far back as 1940 and has since run through seven editions. It aims at reviving a new feeling among the Muslims of the Indo–Pak subcontinent for religious reawakening and reconstruction.

It begins with a comparative study of the various philosophies and doctrines of life prevalent in the world from the earliest times and shows that Islam is the only Way of Life suited to human nature. Then there is an enlightening discussion of the revivalist work in Islam, which outlines and explains, among other things, the salient aspects of the programme that has to be undertaken by a *Mujaddid* for the revival and establishment of Islam in its original pure form on the earth. This is indeed a marvellous chapter and perhaps the very heart of the book. The discussion about Al–Imam–ul–Mehdi, the Ideal *Mujaddid,* scientifically proves that Islam is eventually to emerge as the World–Religion to cure Man of all his maladies, physical and spiritual, and to deliver him from the agonies of want and fear.

Then the author presents in a brief but telling way the history of the Revivalist Movement in Islam from a critical angle. He rightly attacks Hero–worship that has become a religion both in the East and the West and is the virtual cause of many of the human ills. Though the Maulana expected that this would provoke Sufistic opposition he presented the hard facts of history with a view to learning lessons for future guidance. Likewise he stated boldly the causes of failure of the great Islamic Movement, led by so revered men as Sayyid Ahmed Shahid and Shah Isma'il Shahid, to attain its real objective, so that these may help us shape our future destinies for the glory of Islam.

Naturally, this frank appraisal brought in its wake a storm of scathing criticism. Those people, who were hit for their hero–worship or who felt offended on account of their vague and exaggerated notions about *Tajdid* and, especially, about Imam Mehdi, raised cries of protest against the Maulana. Some such typical objections and misgivings have been coolly and analytically dealt with in the appendices which offer a wealth of knowledge on, and afford a rare insight into, subjects like *Tasawwuf,* Revelation, Imam Mehdi, etc.

With these remarks I present this book to the English reader. As for its language it cannot be expected to match with the unique style of the Maulana, who is undoubtedly the greatest prose–writer of modern Urdu.

The reader will do well to first go through the Glossary of the Islamic terms that have been used in this book. I am grateful to the Maulana himself who personally took interest in the preparation of this glossary. Besides, I would be failing in my duty if I did not acknowledge the help given by Ch. Muhammad Akbar and Malik Ghulam Ali during my work of translation.

Lahore
February, 1963

Al-Ash'ari

GLOSSARY

Akhbar–i–Ashaad are the *Ahadith* (pl. of *Hadith*) reported by a few reporters only as against the *mashhoor* (well–known among the scholars of *Hadith*) and *mutawatir* (commonly reported by reporters at every stage) Ahadith. *Bai'at* was originally the oath of allegiance taken by Muslims at the hand of a Caliph who was the religious as well as the political head of Islamic State, but in modern usage it implies the oath taken by the people at the hand of a spiritual guide only.

Faqeeh is one well–versed in Islamic Jurisprudence (*Fiqh*).

Fiqh is Islamic Jurisprudence deducted and worked out by the various schools of Thought from the Quran and the *Sunnah*.

Hadith is a Saying, Action,or Affairs of the Holy Prophet as reported by reporters.

Hajj is the annual prescribed pilgrimage to the *Ka'abah* in the prescribed days of Zil–Hajj.

Ijtihad is exerting one's utmost, in accordance with the laid down principles, with a view to deducing laws from the Quran and the *Sunnah* applicable to new circumstances and conditions.

Ilham and *Ilqa* (lexically, divine instruction received by any–body including Prophets) is, according to Muslim terminology, a kind of 'divine inspiration' received by a non–Prophet in the shape of more or less vague hints.

Imam (literally, leader) was originally used for a Caliph only, but is a title that may be used for an authority or expert in any science or art. The Shi–ite conception is different.

Jihad implies all possible effort (including fighting) put in with a view to promoting the case of Islam.

Jizya is the levy imposed by an Islamic State on its non–Muslim citizen for providing security of life and property and in lieu of exemption from military duty.

Ka'abah is the room built by Prophet Ibrahim in Makka. It was the first centre of God–worship in the world in known history.

Kalimah is the basic article of Islamic faith: "There is none worthy of worship but Allah; Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah."

Kashf (literally, revelation) is revealing or making known something to somebody. Revelation is a misnomer for *Wahi.* (see *Wahi*).

Ma'arifah is the comprehension and consciousness of Allah and His Attributes.

Mujaddid is one who undertakes and carries out *Tajdid* .

Mujahid (pl. *mujahidin*) is one who undertakes *Jihad* .

Mujtahid is one who undertakes and carries out *Ijtihad* .

Qiblah is the direction towards which the Muslims turn their face while offering prayers.

Salah is the prescribed Islamic prayers offered at prescribed times.

Shaikh is a title given to a religious and spiritual guide.

Shariah is the detailed Law prescribed by Islam.

Sunnah is the Pattern of Life set by the Holy Prophet.

Surah is a Chapter of the Holy Quran.

Tafsir is a commentary on the Holy Quran.

Tajdid is striving with a view to bringing about the Revival of Islam in all its various aspects and in its true form and spirit as against modernisation and innovation.

Taqlid is rigid conformity to already worked out laws by the early *Imams* and denotes the absence of *Ijtihad.*

Tariqah (tices and customs set and followed by Sufis).

Tasawwuf (Muslim term for mysticism) implies the various practices, customs and exercises based on a particular philosophy of life adopted with a view to purifying the soul and attaining nearness to Allah.

Tawaf is circumambulating of the *Ka'abah.*

Ummah (in the context of this book) is the community of the Muslims.

Wahi (literally, secret instruction) is Divine Revelation received by the Prophets in full consciousness and without ambiguity as to its being from Allah and its meaning and implication.

Zakat is the obligatory due paid by a Muslim to a deserving fellow–being at a fixed rate on his annual savings, land produce, trade capital, cattle, wealth, etc.

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

PREFACE TO THE FIRST (URDU) EDITION

Mujaddid is one of the commonly used words of the Islamic terminology. Its general meanings are well–known: a *mujaddid* is one who revives and restores Islam. But as regards its technical meaning, most people do not fully appreciate it. Few people, for instance, understand fully what *Tajdid* really is, what kind of work it implies, what are its scope and sphere, and what is total and what is partial *Tajdid*. Mainly due to this ignorance people do not fully comprehend the nature of achievements of the great men of Islamic History who have been recognised as *mujaddids*. They only seem to know this much that each one among 'Umar bin 'Abdul 'Aziz, Imam Ghazali, Imam Ibn–i–Taimiyyah, Shaikh Ahmad of Sirhind and Shah Waliullah of Delhi was a *mujaddid,* but they do not seem to realise in what particular aspect each one was a *mujaddid,* and what was the nature and place of the revivalist work accomplished by each one of them. One main reason for this ignorance is that names which bear high sounding titles like *Hazrat, Imam, Hujjat–ul–Islam, Qutb–ul–Arifeen Zubdat–ul–Salikeen* etc. begin weighing so heavily on the minds as to soon deprive them of all freedom of thinking. This does not leave them with the ability to examine thoroughly the works and achievements of these revered people and judge precisely the nature and extent of their services to the cause of reviving Islam. Then the language adopted to describe their achievements is generally more poetic than scientific. This gives the reader an impression, which is perhaps harboured by the writer also, that the one being described was a paragon of virtue and whatever he did was by all means the most perfect and nothing beyond that was humanly possible. Such blind faith and careless estimation, however, can in no way help us in our efforts to revive and restore Islam.

We shall have to understand fully the process of *Tajdid*, and looking back upon our History determine to what extent and in what ways have the different leaders accomplished this work during the last centuries, how far we can benefit from their achievements, and how we can make up for any possible failings in their work.

This subject demands a whole book for its proper treatment. That is, however, not possible at present. Luckily the suggestion to write on Shah Waliullah furnished me with the opportunity for dealing briefly with this subject. It is hoped that this brief discussion may provide someone with the necessary incentive to compile a comprehensive History of the Revivalist Movement in Islam.

This essay which is being issued in the book form now was originally written for the Shah Waliullah number of the *Al-Furqan*, Bareilly. Naturally the revivalist work of Shah Waliullah has received comparatively greater attention in it than the works of the other *mujaddids* which have just been touched upon to serve as necessary background. The reader while going through the following pages should bear in mind that this book is not intended to encompass the works of all the *mujaddids*, but it treats of the more important *mujaddids* only who have left a lasting imprint on the History of Islam. It should be remembered that *Tajdid* has been undertaken by many people in the past in every age, but a few among them have really deserved the title of *mujaddid*.

February, 1940

Abul A'ala Maududi

PREFACE TO THE FIFTH (URDU) EDITION

This book has been made the target of reproach by mischief–mongers. I have, therefore, revised and made clear all those statements which were purposely being misconstrued, and given references to all those quotations which were being ascribed to my authorship and thus brought under scathing criticism. Moreover, I have appended at the end all those statements which were issued and published from time to time by me in the *Tarjuman–ul–Quran* in response to objectors. Though even after this tongues will not stop their propaganda, it is hoped that discerning ears will to a large extent be protected against deceit and falsehood. I can do no more than what Allah helps me to do.

October, 1960

Abul A'ala Maududi

CHAPTER I

Conflict Between Islam And Un–Islam

WHATEVER system of life will be planned for man in this world, it must originate from certain metaphysical or theological concepts. No scheme of life is possible without a clear conception of man and the world in which he lives. The question, how should man behave or how should he act in this world, is closely related to the question: What is man? What is his position in this world? And what kind of system is this universe with which he should try to bring the way of his life in full conformity? Each different answer to this question will give rise to a different ethical system which, in turn, will determine the structure of the various aspects of human life. Then within the framework of that structure, individual character and detailed rules and regulations for social relations will be evolved to finally give shape to a particular culture.

All the existing and the past systems of life have had to adopt some basic metaphysical philosophy and some basic moral theory. It is these basic concepts which distinguish one system of life from the other, not only in major principles but also in the minutest details. As a matter of fact, this metaphysical basis and this moral theory determine the nature of every system of life, for they are like the soul to the body. Apart from minor details, as a general principle, only our metaphysical doctrines are possible and all the existing and the past systems of life can be shown by analysis to have adopted one or the other of these four doctrines.

ATHEISM

According to this doctrine which is based on sheer 'Ignorance' the whole universe has come into being by mere accident and there is no wisdom, no purpose, no object behind its creation. It is working arbitrarily and it will suddenly come to

an end without leaving any trace behind it. It has no master, and if there is any, his existence or non–existence does not make any difference to human life. Man is an animal who, like other things, came into being by some accident. We need not bother ourselves about the question: Who created him? Or why was he created ? He simply happens to be here on the earth with some inherent desires which crave for their fulfilment. He possesses certain faculties and tools which help him satisfy these desires. Different sorts of material lying about him on the earth is exploited by him to achieve the same end. It appears that he has no aim in life except the satisfaction of the demands of his animal nature and his human skills and abilities are intended only to enable him to meet these demands in a more and more satisfying manner.

There is no supernatural source of knowledge and guidance wherefrom he could receive a doctrine of life. He should, therefore, draw a code of life from the results of his interaction with the environments and the history of his accumulating experience.

Then, there appears to be no ruling authority to which man might be held answerable, and for that reason he is answerable to nobody. At the most his own conscience may reproach him or he may be called to account by a power risen from among men to govern them.

Whatever the results of our actions, they are confined to our worldly lives. There is no Hereafter. The judgement on whether something is good or bad, right or wrong, worth having or discarding, will be pronounced by the results of human experience in this world.

Man, in this state of sheer 'Ignorance', that is, when he cannot feel anything beyond his immediate perceptions or is too selfish to do so, becomes a mental slave of atheism. World–worshippers in all ages have always held the same point of view. With a few exceptions, almost all kings and their courtiers, all ruling chiefs and prosperous people and all those who would die for riches, have, in general, preferred this conception of life. Even those nations the praises of whose cultural progress have

been sung in the pages of history have, in most cases, built up their systems of life on the foundations of this doctrine. The same viewpoint is working at the root of the modern Western civilization. It does not, however, mean that all the Westerners disbelieve in God and in the life Hereafter. Nor do all of them favour a materialistic code of morality. But the fact is that the spirit pervading their civilization is the spirit of disbelief in God and in the life Hereafter, and of materialistic morality. This trend has become so ingrained into their mental make-up that even those among them who believe in God and the Hereafter intellectually, and favour a non-materialistic morality, unconsciously behave as atheists and materialists in practical life. This is but natural, because their intellectual convictions have little or no bearing on their actual practice of life.

Similar was the condition of the former cmmunities who had forgotten God. Though the epicureans of Baghdad, Damascus, Delhi and Granada, being Muslims, professed to believe in God and in the Hereafter, their general behaviour in worldly life betrayed their indifference to the existence of God and the reality of the Hereafter. They behaved as if they were not answerable to anybody, nor did they stand in need of getting guidance from anywhere. Their only concern was to find means, lawful or unlawful, to gratify their passions and they were, in the every way, free to do this. And the term of life placed at their disposal was to be spent in the acquisition and enjoyment of worldly luxuries.

As has been pointed out above, theory of life, by its very nature, gives rise to a purely materialistic system of morality, whether it is propounded and laid down in books or remains confined to human minds. Trouble arises when people with such mental attitude begin to develop arts and sciences on the one hand and evolve general trends of thought on the other. Their evil influence, gradually finds its way into the educational systems and infuses them with the materialistic and atheistic spirit. Consequently, individual character, relations between men, and social laws develop in complete harmony with this concept of life, ultimately flowering in society which can only boast of

clever, dishonest, untruthful, cruel and wicked people as its best men. Such are the people who then assume leadership of the society and are able to seize power, thus bringing in an unbridled rule without any fear of being called to account. They base all their policies on the Machiavellian principles of politics. For them might is right. Nothing can stop them from oppression and tyranny except an external material hindrance. Inside the state this general state of oppression encourages the stronger to suppress the weaker, while externally it favours the rise of nationalism, imperialism, colonial opportunism and the greed to grab the weaker nations.

POLYTHEISM

The second metaphysical doctrine is based on polytheism. According to it the system of the universe is neither accidental nor Godless, but has many masters and not one. This view does not have the support of any scientific proof, but is simply the creation of man's own imagination. That is why the polytheists of all ages have neither agreed nor will ever agree in assigning Godhead to the same imaginary or perceived objects. They grope in darkness and make a deity of whatever falls in their hands; and thus, the total number of such duties has always been falling or rising in different ages. Angels, ghosts, spirits, stars, living or dead men, trees, mountains, animals, rivers, earth, fire, etc., have all been made gods at one time or the other. Even abstract ideas like love, beauty, lust, procreative power, disease, war, wealth, peace, etc. were believed to be gods. Not only that: certain imaginary combinations such as nymphs, lionman, bird–man, a four–headed–man, a thousand–handed–man, trunk–nosed–man, etc., were also worshipped by the idolaters.

This mythology, then, gathered around it many whims and superstitions as each polytheistic community added stupendously to the stock according to the extent of its imagination. Communities holding the conception of a Supreme God or Allah conceive Him to be King, and the lesser gods and goddesses as His ministers, courtiers, companions, agents and officials. They believe that man connot have access to the King, as all His

affairs are wholly in the hands of lesser gods. Other communities which do not have any, or have only a vague idea of a Supreme Deity, take the various lesser deities to have divided the Godly powers wholly among themselves.

Next to atheism, 'Ignorance' based on polytheism has been dominating man's mind from the earliest times. A study of history shows that man succumbed to such ideas only when he was mentally low and degraded. Under the good influence of the Prophets people turned to believe in the One Almighty and discarded the hosts of other gods. But this state did not persist for long as they soon took Prophets themselves and the saints, martyrs, different categories of pious men and women, scholars and spiritual leaders, etc., and many a "reflection of God on the earth" as agents of Godhead in one form or the other. These foolish people rejected the gods of the idolaters only to replace them with the pious devotees of God who had spent their lives in establishing the Godhead of Allah against the self-assumed godhead of men. Now on the one hand, was invented a new code of alms for the dead, visiting graves, offering sacrifices and celebrating festivals at the graves, carrying flags of saints and such other rituals as substitutes for the idolatrous worship. On the other hand was worked out a whole mythology round saints about the wonders of their births and deaths, their miraculous disappearance and re-appearance, their super-natural powers and authority and their influence with God, without any authentic proof. This mythology, it may be remarked, was in every way like the idolatrous mythology. Not only this: these people were invested with powers of mediation also. Therefore prayers for spiritual help and appeals for bounty were made to them, though Allah alone can grant these.

It will be seen that such ideas are practically identical with those held by the idolaters who thought that the true Master of the universe was far beyond the reach of man and all the affairs of human life were directly in the hands of the lower officials. The difference, if any, was only this that the idolaters openly called these officials as deities, gods, or sons of God; whereas the so-called followers of the Prophets concealed their

idolatry by giving them titles like hermits, saints, friends of Allah etc.

Throughout the ages, polytheism has been reinforcing atheism. The ancient civilizations of Babylon, Egypt, India, Iran, Greece and Rome had combined the two. In our age, the Japanese civilization presents a similar case. There are several reasons for this agreement and I shall point out some of these.

First, polytheism does not give man any feeling of real relationship with his gods except that he imagines them to be all-controlling agencies, having the power to bestow happiness or inflict pain. With this mental background he tries to invoke their favour and help in attaining his worldly aims and objects by various acts of worship. As to the possibility of receiving any moral guidance or a way of life from them, the polytheist is least bothered because there is none to reveal these. Therefore, the idolaters themselves invent a code of morality and plan a way of life on its basis and thus, becomes operative simple and pure atheism ! It is obvious that the only difference between the two social systems is that the one has temples, worshippers and series of rituals; whereas the other has no such formality. But as regards moral behaviour the two are almost identical. That is why one is not surprised to find a striking resemblance between the moral temperament of ancient Greece and idolatrous Rome and that of modern Europe.

Second, polytheism cannot give an independent and lasting basis for arts and sciences, philosophy and literature, politics and economics, etc. Here again, the idolater has to go the way of atheism. And, so, the mental development of the idolatrous society follows the course of the former society with the one difference that the idolaters possess a highly developed superstitious faculty which renders them largely speculative; whereas the atheists are rather a practical sort of people having little to do with theories and speculations. But when the atheists try to solve the riddle of the Godless universe, their reasoning becomes as irrational as the idolatrous mythology. Anyhow, when the two ideologies are viewed analytically they are found to be fundamentally akin. A striking illustration of the above

conclusion is the anxiety of the modern Europe to establish her intellectual ancestry with ancient Greece and Rome.

Third, the idolatrous society shows great keenness to accept and follow all the ways of life adopted by the atheists, though at root the basis and structure of the two societies are somewhat different. Kings are made gods by the idolaters and spiritual leaders and religious officials become a distinguished class by themselves. Then, kings and religious leaders join hands to make a supreme class. And thus gradually, the idea of superiority of one family over the other and of one class over the other becomes established, paving way for a reign of suppression over the ignorant masses by means of religious taboo. On the contrary, such defects enter an atheistic society in the guise of race-worship, nationalism, imperialism, dictatorship, capitalism and class-struggle. But in spirit, the two ideologies are akin, as both favour the mastery of one man over other men, and divide man from man making the individuals of the same race blood-thirsty enemies.

ASCETICISM

According to the metaphysical theory based on asceticism this world and the human body are the means of torture for man. The human soul is imprisoned in this elemental cage. Pleasures and desires and other bodily needs of man are actually the shackles and fetters of prison-house. The more a man is involved in their gratification, the more he will become polluted and deserve to be tortured. The only way to salvation from this prison-house is to denounce this world, curb desires, suppress pleasures, and refuse to fulfil the demands of the body. All relations of love with the worldly objects and with the kith and kin have to be uprooted from the heart with a view to torturing the body, our eternal enemy, with such extreme measures as may render it too weak to dominate the soul. This practice, it is believed, lightens the soul's burden and makes it pure, thus enabling it to soar high enough to attain salvation.

Though this theory is anti-social, it has influenced social life in different ways. It has produced a system of philosophy of its

own, which is represented in different forms by Vedantaism, Mani–ism, Neo–Platonism, Yoga, mysticism, Christian monasticism, Buddhism, etc. This system has given rise to a special form of morality which by nature is more negative than positive. It is the inevitable corollary of asceticism and wherever it penetrates literature, beliefs, morality and practical life it benumbs the whole nation as if by opium.

This form of 'Ignorance' joins hands with the first two in three different ways:

(1) It severs the good and pious people from their worldly activities and drives them into retirement, clearing ground for the devils incarnate. These wicked people, then, become guardians of God's earth to freely disrupt peace, while the good people rest content with their endeavours to achieve salvation.

(2) When the monastic influence reaches the common people it develops in them a wrong conception of trust in God and a pessimistic outlook on life. This renders them an easy prey to the oppressors. It is mainly for this reason that kings, ruling chiefs, and the so–called religious leaders have been, throughout ages, favouring and taking keen interest in the spread of monastic ideology. The whole volumes of history fail to present even a single instance of any conflict of Imperialism, Capitalism and Papacy against the monastic view of life and morality.

(3) When this monastic philosophy of life and morality is defeated by human nature, a need is felt to compile a book of apologies. The theory of atonement is invented to enable the people to commit sins to their hearts' content without any fear of losing paradise. Immoral physical love is allowed for gratifying desires as a necessary step to love of God so that those committing it may still have their halo of holiness intact. Kings and ruling chiefs are conspired with and a snare of spiritual ascendency is set, the worst examples of which have been

presented by the Roman Papacy in the West and the latter–day representatives of Sufism in the East.

This is what asceticism does to its sister forms of ignorance but when it penetrates into the communities of the Prophets of God it makes the matters worse. There, it presents the world before man as a torture–house and a *maze of maya* so as to counteract the Divine conception of its being a place of action, a place of test and a sowing–field for the Hereafter. This basic difference between the two viewpoints makes a difference of worlds. Man forgets that he has been appointed God's Vicegerent on the earth. He thinks that he has not been sent here to actively administer the affairs of the world but has been thrown into dirt and filth which he must detest and shun. Therefore, the best attitude he can adopt here is one of non–cooperation and of avoiding responsibilities rather than accepting them. With such an attitude man views the world and its affairs with a shrinking mind. How can he be accepted to shoulder the responsibilities of vicegerency when he does not even feel confident to face his own social problems with courage? Thus, the whole way of life revealed by God is rendered meaningless for him. Worship and the prescribed injunctions lose their special significance for him in the sense that they are meant to reform worldly life and prepare man for his duties of God's vicegerency. Instead, man takes it into his head that worship and other rituals are meant only to atone for his sins, and the performance of these with complete devotion and regularity is enough to achieve one's salvation.

This mentality caused a section of the Prophets, communities to give themselves away to acute spiritual observances and lose themselves in practices of obstinence and austerity, such as counting prayers, performing so–called pious acts, vision of spiritual phenomena, and the far–fetched philosophic interpretations of reality.[1] Consequently, their absorption in the performance of their self–imposed duties obscured their

1. For instance, Pantheism.

vision of their primary duty of establishing God's rule on the earth which, in fact, had been the mission of all the Prophets.

Another section of the people was driven into a different direction. Their minds were diseased with the tendency to probe deep into things unnecessarily, exaggerate, and show undue concern for details. God's Religion became a tender affair in their hands which was liable to be upset with any triviality. These so–called protectors of religion became increasingly cautious to see that this fragile glass vessel was handled gently and kept immune from all possible dangers of breakage. When such niceties enter religion they inevitably cause its followers to become more and more rigid in their views, narrow–minded and devoid of high ideals. How can such decrepit people be expected to view major problems of human life with a freshness of approach and breadth of vision ? How can they ever grasp the universal principles of Religion and become intellectually and otherwise fit to lead the world through all turns of the changing times ?

ISLAM

The fourth metaphysical doctrine is the one presented by the Prophets of God (peace be upon them all). According to it this world which surrounds us and includes us is the Kingdom of a Divine Being. He created it and He alone is its real Master and sole Ruler. None but He can command it. We are all His subjects and He alone possesses all the powers to control the affairs to this vast universe.

Man in this Kingdom is, by birth, a subject. That is, it has not been given to him to choose to be or not to be a subject. Being a born subject, therefore, he cannot possibly assume a position other than that of a subject.

The system of this government is such that it does not leave any room for man to exercise his own free–will, nor is it possible for him, being a born subject and a natural part of this Kingdom, to swerve from the path of obedience followed by the other creations. Similarly he does not have the right to choose a way of life for himself or assume whatever duties he likes. The only

alternative left to him is to follow the Guidance received from the Supreme Ruler. This Guidance is revealed to the pious men called Prophets.

The Master, however, has adopted a subtle way of testing man. He has hidden Himself from his eyes as well as the whole internal machinery with which He rules His Kingdom. It appears as if this great system is working without a master, nor does one find any officials working in it. Man witnesses a huge factory, working day and night, and finds himself placed in it. He never feels that his position here is that of a subject and he is answerable to a Supreme Authority. Neither do the external phenomena suggest, even vaguely, that he is a mere subject and there is a Supreme Ruler of the world to Whom he is answerable for all his activities here. Prophets come but no body can see with the eyes how Revelations descend upon them; nor are they accompanied by any clear signs that may establish their Prophethood beyond any doubt. Then up to a certain extent, man feels himself to be completely free. If he feels like refusing to obey, he is given freedom, and is provided with all possible means to do so. He is completely left to himself, so much so, that he reaches unchecked the last limits of depravity and sin. Even if he chooses to worship others besides God he is not deterred but is allowed freedom to obey and worship whomsoever he pleases. In all cases he gets his quota of provisions regularly and is subsisted with all the materials of life, means of prosperity and comfort according to his status in life. All these facilities continue to be afforded to him till his death. It never happens that a rebel is refused the necessities of life simply to punish him for his sins. Man has been endowed with powers of reasoning and discrimination; he can exercise freewill and choose between things; and he has been made master over the rest of creation. It is simply on account of these endowments that the above procedure has been adopted to test him. To implement this scheme, Reality has been concealed from his eyes so that his powers of reason and discrimination are put to a sharp test. He has been given freedom to choose in order to see whether, after ascertaining the Truth, he goes the right way willingly or turns

his face to become the slave of his own passions. Obviously, unless one is afforded the necessary materials of life, means and opportunity to work, one cannot possibly be tested in one's ability to show good or bad results.

As this worldly life is a period of test, there is neither any question of accountability here, nor of rewards and nor of punishments. Therefore, whatever is given here is not the reward of a good act, but the material of test; and whatever handicaps, hardships and misfortunes are encountered they are not the punishment for a bad act but the necessary consequences of acts in accordance with the natural laws governing the universe. [2] The real assessment of and judgement on our actions will be conducted after the period of test is over, i.e., in the Hereafter. Hence, the results of our actions in this world do not, in any way, determine the rightness or wrongness of an action or a way of life and cannot, therefore, become that criterion of our acceptance or rejection of it. The real criterion is the judgement of the Hereafter. To know what kind of fruit an action or a way of life will bear is possible only through the Guidance revealed by God to his Prophets. Apart from details, the decisive factor upon which depends the success or failure in the Hereafter is first, whether or not man, by the right use of his faculty of reasoning and intuition, recognizes God as the true Sovereign and His Guidance revealed through the Prophets as carrying the whole Truth; and second, whether or not after ascertaining this Truth, he brings himself round to bow before the Sovereignty of God and obeys willingly all the commands given by Him.

This is the doctrine of Islam which has been presented time and again by the Prophets from the earliest times. It explains all events and manifestations fully well. It gives a satisfactory inter-

2. It does not mean that the principle of giving rewards and inflicting punishments is not at all operative in this world. What is meant is that rewards and punishments of this world are not decisive and final; they are in fact governed by the element of test. Therefore, the consequences of acts here cannot be regarded as the criterion for moral good and evil.

pretation of all the worldly phenomena. No observation or experiment has seen it break down. It propounds its own special system of philosophy which is basically different from the un–Godly systems. It orders and organises the whole available information about the universe and especially man in a way totally opposed to that of un–Godly sciences. It carves out a new way of development for arts and literature, almost wholly different in character from all the various ways trodden by un–Godly arts and literature. It gives a new outlook to and creates new ideals for social affairs of life, absolutely unknown to un–Godly communities. It provides a new basis for morality having no shade of resemblance with the un–Godly systems. No wonder then, that the nature of the cultural superstructure raised on the new intellectual and moral foundations would be wholly at variance with the un–Godly civilizations. To support and sustain such a unique superstructure, it is evident, a new system of education and character–building would be required with prinicples entirely opposed in spirit to those followed by the un–Godly people. Above all, the spirit, working through the texture of the new doctrine and system is that of the Sovereignty of Allah, the Almighty, belief in the Hereafter, and of man's position as a subject and his accountability. On the contrary, the spirit working at the root of un–Godly civilizations is that of man's autonomy, unbridled use of freedom and irresponsibility. It is for this reason that the type of humanity produced by the prophetic example and precept is essentially different from the un–Godly mould, both in the outward appearance and in the inner details.

Then the detalied structure of social life which ensues from the above doctrine is inherently opposed to all others existing in the world. Matters pertaining to cleanliness, food and clothes, etiquette and personal character, earning of livelihood and expending wealth, married life and family affairs, social customs and collective behaviour, various aspect of man's relation with man, business transactions, distribution of wealth, administration of the country, structure of government, position of the head of state, working of the parliament, organization of civil

services, principles of law-making and deduction of by-laws, judiciary, police, audit services, revenues, finance, public works, industry and commerce, communications, education, organization and training of defence forces, peace and war, international affairs and foreign policy—in short, all problems of human life, whether big or small, are viewed and treated by Islam in its own special way. Thus the Islamic way of looking at things is unique in almost all detaits and is sharply demarcated from all other ways. It is characterised by a special viewpoint, a specific ideal and an invigorating ethical theory which link up its whole ideology directly with Allah's absolute Sovereignty, man's position as a subject and his accountability, and with the reality of the Hereafter as against the transitoriness of this world.

MISSION OF THE PROPHETS

The Prophets were sent, one after the other, to establish such a social system in the world. With the exception of the monastic civilization, no other civilization, whether Islamic or un-Islamic, that views life from a universal standpoint and possesses a comprehensive system of administering the worldly affairs, can resist the urge for power in order that it may change the social life of its subjects after its own pattern. Without the power to enforce, it is meaningless merely to believe in or present a doctrine or a way of life. A monk in fact has no desire, whatever, to meddle with the worldly affairs. He feels content with his endeavours to achieve the so-called salvation by acute spiritual observances, away from the busy life of the world. Therefore, power has no use for him. On the contrary, the one who rises with the sole purpose of administering the worldly affairs and reforming humanity at large, cannot help struggling to seize power. For unless one possesses necessary power and authority to enforce one's programme, the proposed system cannot possibly take root in the world of reality. In the absence of power it cannot even stick for long in the minds or stay on paper. As a matter of fact, a civilization in authority alone can force the world to follow its example in the daily routine of life, and accept its lead in the sciences and trends of thought, in arts,

literature and morality, in education and character formation, in law and principles of civics, and in all other aspects of life. Thus a civilization without power is rendered helpless and incapacitated so long as the ruling civilization remains in power. Consequently, even those people who favoured it before begin doubting its workability in the world of action. Not only that: its so–called leaders and representatives do not hesitate in effecting shameful compromises with the civilization in power. One fails to understand how on earth it becomes possible to effect a compromise of any sort between two social systems having principles diametrically opposed in concept and spirit. Indeed, no social system worth its name can tolerate such a compromise. To view it as practicable is to betray one's bankruptcy of reason, and to show willingness for its acceptance is to reflect a serious lack of one's courage of conviction.

The ultimate aim of all the Prophets' missions in the world has been to establish the Kingdom of God on the earth and to enforce the system of life received from Him.[3] The Prophets, one and all, could very well concede the polytheists' demand of sticking to their old beliefs and practices, in so far as their activities and influence were restricted to their own communal sphere, but they could never agree, and rightly so, to their remaining in authority and yielding power for their own ends. With this object before them all the Prophets did endeavour to bring about political revolutions in their respective ages. Some of them were only able to prepare ground, as Prophet Abraham; others succeeded in practically starting the revolutionary movement but their mission was terminated before they could establish the rule of God, as Prophet Jesus. But there were others who led their movement to its natural goal, culminating in the establishment of the Kingdom of God on the earth. In this latter

3. Some righteous people of our time have generally been heard saying: "Government is not the object, it is promised." They seem to view government as a blessing and reward from Allah and not as something demanding service and responsibility. They perhaps forget that the government needed to practically enforce Islam is the very object of Allah's *Shariah* and establishing it even by *Jihad* obligatory on every Muslim.

category are included Prophet Joseph, Prophet Moses and our Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon them all).

NATURE OF THE PROPHETS' MISSION

Viewed on the whole, the nature of the mission undertaken by the various Prophets is seen to be as follows:

1. To revolutionise the intellectual and mental outlook of humanity and to instil the Islamic attitude towards life and morality to such an extent that their very way of thinking, ideal in life, and standards of values and behaviour become Islamic.
2. To regiment all such people who have accepted Islamic ideals and moulded their lives after Islamic pattern with a view to struggling for power and seizing it by the use of all available means and equipment.
3. To establish Islamic rule and organise the various aspects of social life on Islamic bases, to adopt such means as will widen the sphere of Islamic influence in the world, and to arrange for the moral and intellectual training, by contact and example, of all those people who enter the fold of Islam from time to time.

THE RIGHTLY-GUIDED CALIPHATE

Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), the last of the Prophets, completed this whole task in twenty three years. After him, his mission was carried on successfully by the two great leaders of Islam, viz. Abu Bakr Siddiq and Umar Faruq (may God be pleased with them) in all its various aspects. Then the leadership was transferred to Hazrat Usman and during the first few years of his Caliphate the same order, as was established by the Holy Prophet, remained in force.

ONSLAUGHT OF 'IGNORANCE'

But soon two important factors weakened the Caliphate. First, the fast expanding Islamic state brought in new problems every day thus adding to the pressure of work and responsibilities of the Caliph; and second, Hazrat Uthman, who had been elected to shoulder the heavy burden of Caliphate, did not

possess the qualities of leadership to the extent his great forerunners had been endowed with.[4] Consequently, 'Ignorance' found its way into the Islamic social system during his Caliphate. The Caliph laid down his very life to arrest the onslaught of the evil forces but it was not checked. After him Hazrat Ali came forward and did his utmost to safeguard Islam's political supremacy but even his blood could not put a stop to the progress of the counter revolution. This is how, at last, "the Caliphate after the pattern of Prophethood" came to an end, to be replaced by the tyrant kingdom. And thus, the governmental reins, once again passed into the impious hands.

After seizing power, 'Ignorance' began eating into the community life like cancer. Only Islam could check such an evil influence but it had already been thrown out of power. The matters were not simple as the worst had befallen. 'Ignorance' was working its influence in the guise of Islam. If the atheists, idolaters and disbelievers had come forward in their real shape, there was every chance of their being over–thrown. But here the situation was quite different. 'Ignorance' professed belief in the Unity of God and Prophethood, performed pious acts of fasting and praying and feigned eagerness to refer disputes to the *Quran* and *Sunnah*. Getting together of Islam and un–Islam in the same body–politic gives rise to great complications. It is far easier to tackle the forces of naked evil. If you come out to fight it, thousands and lakhs of sincere and right–thinking people will join and support you whole–heartedly in this noble cause, and no Muslim will dare oppose you openly. But if you come out to fight a combination of good and evil, not only the hypocrites but a great many good Muslims also will gird up their loins to oppose you tooth and nail and even go to the extent of proving you to be in the wrong. Appearance of a 'Muslim' on

4. Some of our 'jurists' have remarked that this sentence is derogatory to Hazrat Uthman. In fact, what I mean to suggest is that Hazrat Uthman did not possess the qualities of leadership to the extent these were possessed by Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddiq and Hazrat Umar Faruq. This is a question of history about which students of history may express different views; it is not a juristic or scholastic point that it may be subjected to legal verdicts by 'jurists'.

the platform or in the chair of un–Islamic politics, his becoming a teacher in an un–Islamic institution, and his occupying the seat of an un–Islamic spiritual leadership, are grave pitfalls which only a few are able to avoid.

The most hideous aspect of this counter–revolution was the emergence of all the three above mentioned types of 'Ignorance' under the guise of Islam and their fast spreading influence in the Islamic community.

Atheism grabbed power and authority in the name of Caliphate but, in reality, it was monarchy which was the very antithesis of Islam. Now, a great temptation was felt to adore and worship kings but nobody could dare do it. Therefore, the title of "God's reflection on the earth"[5] was invented for the kings, and they, under the cover of this title, assumed the position of absolute authority with all its implications. This change worked a tremendously far–reaching negative influence on the lives and mental attitudes of the chiefs, government officials and representatives, soldiers and the ease–loving people in general, to the extent their very view of morality and social life was altogether perverted. Then, naturally, an urge was felt to re–organise un–Godly arts and literature, philosophy and sciences so as to make them fit in with the new patterns of life and trends of thought. Such things can flourish only under the patronage of wealth and authority. Here, then, was a large opening for them to emerge freely. Such were the general intellectual conditions that favoured the downpour of all admix-

5. No doubt, these words occur in the Traditions but their meaning has not been correctly understood. "Sultan" in Arabic means 'authority and power'. The Holy Prophet has used this word in its literal meanings and not in the metaphoric sense implying one who holds authority and power. The Holy Prophet has asserted that the worldly government and authority is in fact a reflection of Allah's Sovereignty. One who will use this authority, which is indeed Allah's gift, justly and for the sake of truth will be blessed with more favours by Allah. On the contrary, one who will abuse it for selfish ends will incur Allah's wrath and His displeasure. People misconstrued this wise Saying and taking kings to be the 'Reflection of God' made it the religious basis for king–worship against the very intention of the Holy Prophet.

tures of philosophy, literature and science from the Greek, Iranian and Indian skies on the Muslim soil. With these started the scholastic "duels" among the Muslims, the creed of the Mutazilites, atheistic and sceptical trends, and above all, the tendency of hair-splitting in the matter of "beliefs", resulting in the creation of a number of new sects. Not only that : fine arts like dancing, music, and painting which are strictly un-Islamic found patronage from those who had been forbidden to practise these "ugly" arts.[6]

Polytheism made incursions on the common man's mind and diverted him from the path of worshipping one God and led him into the blind alleys of ignorance and sin. Short of open idol-worship, there was left no form of polytheism which was not practised by the "Muslims". People of the un-Godly communities, who embraced Islam, brought with them many polytheistic beliefs and ideas. While professing Islam, therefore, they had only to look for some heroes of Islam and the graves of saints to replace their idols and modify their rituals accordingly. In this task, unfortunately, the world-seeking *Ulema* also joined hands with them and tried to clear their way of all possible hindrances which could be encountered while transplanting idolatry in Islam. They worked hard to distort the meanings of the verses of the Quran and misconstrue the Traditions with a view to making room for grave-and-saint-worship in the system of Islam. They imbued the Islamic terminology with new meanings in order to provide cover for polytheistic customs, and they gave such a clever twist to the ways of the new creed that it could not be easily branded with idolatry. But for this technical help, it was well nigh impossible for this ugly creed to have crept into the Islamic system.

Monasticism attacked the religious scholars and guides, righteous and good-natured people and infused into them all the above mentioned evils. Under the influence of this antisocial creed, the Muslim society became impregnated with Greek

6. Scholars like Maulana Shibli and Justice Amir Ali have counted such achievements of these kings among their services to the cause of Islamic culture and civilisation.

philosophy, monastic morality and a general pessimistic attitude towards life. Thus, on the one hand, it perverted Islamic literature and sciences, and incapacitated the thinking element of the society, as if by an injection of morphia; and on the other, it reinforced monarchy, retarded the progress of Islamic arts and sciences by narrowing down outlook, and restricted the whole religious life around a few special rituals and ceremonies only.

NEED FOR MUJADDIDS

To purge Islam of the above evils, and to present it, once again, in its original pure form, was the heavy task for which the *mujaddids* were needed. But it would be wrong to assume that Islam at any time was wholly routed and completely over-powered by this onslaught of 'Ignorance'. As a matter of fact, once a community accepted Islam, lives of its people ever after bore in some degree the imprint of its reformative message. It was all due to this imprint of Islam that great tyrants and absolute rulers shuddered, at times, with the fear of God, and were impelled to walk the path of truth and justice. It was all due to the teaching of Islam that in the dark periods of monarchy one comes across, here and there, upon personalities imbued with piety and high morals. Again, it was all due to the blessings of Islam that in the cradles of royal dynasties which had acquired absolute rights to rule, were nurtured great many pious, just and God-fearing men who, despite their royal rights, ruled, as far as they could, with a rare sense of duty and responsibility. Likewise, Islam continued infusing directly its healthy influence into regal palaces, institutions of philosophy and wisdom, industrial and commercial centres, monastries of life-renunciation, and into other spheres of human life. Then, despite the inroads made by the polytheistic culture, it continued exercising reformative and corrective influence on the beliefs, morals and social life of the common people. On this very account the Muslim people all over the world have always been morally superior to the non-Muslim communities. Moreover, there have always been, in all ages, such people who followed Islam sincerely and firmly and endeavoured to order their as well as

the lives of those under their influence, on the pattern of Islam. But the real aim of the appointment of the Prophets could not be achieved by such attempts as these. Obviously, Islam being a force of secondary importance only could not prosper when the real power was in the impious hands. Nor could a few scattered individuals who practised Islam in the restricted sphere of their personal lives only and who felt little concerned about the various admixture of Islam and un–Islam in the wider sphere of social life around them, bring about a noticeable change in the prevailing social conditions. Therefore, Islam needed in every age, and still needs, such strong men, groups of men and organisations which could change the course of the time and bring the world round to bow before the authority of the One, Almighty.

A TRADITION AND ITS EXPLANATION

This is what has been referred to by the Most Truthful (peace be upon him) in a Saying related by Hazrat Abu Huraira in Abu Daud.

"Allah will raise, at the head of each century, such people for this *Ummah* as will revive its Religion for it."

But some people have wholly misconstrued this Tradition and formed a very wrong view about *tajdid* and *mujaddids*. They thought that "at the head of each century" necessarily meant the beginning or the end of a century, and "who will revive its Religion" referred to some one particular person. With this presumption they began looking, in the pages of Muslim history, for persons who had rendered some services to the Revival of Islam and had died or been born at the beginning or the end of some century. As a matter of fact, neither the word 'head' in the Tradition means an end, nor the pronoun used signifies one single individual. 'Raising a person or a number of persons at the head of a century' clearly means to suggest that he or they will exercise a dominating influence on the various branches of knowledge and trends of thought and life prevalent in their age. The pronoun *mun* in Arabic is used both for singular and plural numbers, and therefore, may imply a single person, a

group of persons or even organisations of people. The Holy Prophet has simply asserted that, God willing, no century (of the Muslim era) will remain devoid of such persons as will rise in the face of 'Ignorance', and endeavour to purge Islam of all kinds of impurities and enforce its system in the world in its original form and spirit. It is, therefore, not necessary that the *mujaddid* of a particular century be just one man; in fact, this task may be accomplished by a number of persons or groups of persons in the same century. Nor is it specified anywhere that the same one *mujaddid* will suffice for the whole world of Islam. There may arise a number of persons in a number of countries contemporaneously and undertake the work of Islamic Revival. Moreover, it is not essential that every such person may deserve the title of *mujaddid,* for this grand title, to be sure, is reserved for those people only who accomplish a work of extra-ordinary value and distinction in the way of rejuvenating Islam, the Religion of Allah.

CHAPTER 2

THE NATURE OF ISLAMIC REVIVAL (TAJDID)

Before we proceed to examine the achievements of the *mujaddids* of Islam, let us first clearly understand what Islamic Revival (*Tajdid*) really means.

INNOVATION AND REVIVAL

Most people do not distinguish between innovation and revival, and very innocently take every innovator for a *mujaddid*. They seem to harbour the impression that any person who invents a new way of life and presents it with force is a *mujaddid*. Especially such people are promptly honoured with the title of *mujaddid* as make an effort to safeguard and protect the worldly interests of a declining Muslim community of their age, or prepare a new admixture of Islam and un–Islam by striking compromises with the un–Godly powers of the day, or try to colour their community wholly in un–Godly colours only keeping its Islamic name intact. Such people may be called the 'innovators' but not *mujaddids*, as their work is more akin to innovation than to Revival. Islamic Revival is neither striking compromises with un–Islam, nor preparing new blends of Islam and un–Islam, but it is cleansing Islam of all the un–Godly elements and presenting it and making it flourish more or less in its original pure form. Considered from this viewpoint, a *mujaddid* is a most un–compromising person with regard to un–Islam, and one least tolerant as to the presence of even a tinge of un–Islam in the Islamic system.

WHO IS A MUJADDID?

Though a *mujaddid* is not a Prophet, yet in spirit he comes very close to prophethood. He is characterized by a clear mind, penetrating vision, unbiased straight thinking, special ability to see the Right Path clear of all extremes and keep balance, power to think independently of the contemporary and centuries–old social and other prejudices, courage to fight against the evils of the time,

inherent ability to lead and guide, and an un–usual competency to undertake *Ijtihad* and the work of reconstruction. Besides these great qualities, he must have acquired a thorough and comprehensive grasp of Islam, must be a perfect Muslim in thought and attitude, must have the acumen to distinguish Islam from un–Islam in the finest details, and must possess the ability to extract the truth from the welter of long–established falsehood. Without these extraordinary qualities nobody can expect to be a *mujaddid;* and these are the very qualities that characterize a Prophet only on a far higher scale.

A MUJADDID AND A PROPHET

But the basic fact that distinguishes a *mujaddid* from a Prophet is that a Prophet is appointed to his mission by Allah; he is fully aware of his appointment as such; and he receives revelation. He starts the work of his mission with a claim to Prophethood; he has to invite people to himself; and the acceptance or rejection of his invitation by the people determines their being believers or un–believers. On the contrary, a *mujaddid* does not hold any of these positions. He is not appointed but becomes a *mujaddid* only by the way. Mostly he is not even aware of his being a *mujaddid* after his passing away on account of the quality of work accomplished by him. He may not be divinely inspired, but if he is, he may not necessarily be aware of it. He does not start his work with any claim, nor is he entitled to do so, for it is not incumbent on the people to believe in him. However, as he starts his work all the good–natured people of the day gradually gather round him, and only such people remain estranged from him as are crooked by nature. But it is in no way binding on the people to believe in and accept him for remaining Muslim.[7] With these limita-

7. Some people raise here the objection that the *mujaddids* like Hazrat Shaikh Ahmad of Sirhind and Shah Waliullah of Delhi have actually laid claims to their being *mujaddids*. The objectors forget that these revered men only gave expression to the fact of their being *mujaddids,* but they never demanded to be acknowledged as such. They in fact never invited the people to themselves and demanded of them to accept them as *mujaddids*, nor did they ever assert that only those people would remain Muslims and attain salvation as would believe in and accept them as *mujaddids.*

tions, and distinctions a *mujaddid,* on the whole, has to undertake and perform the same nature of work as accomplished by a Prophet.

ASPECTS OF ISLAMIC REVIVAL (TAJDID)

Following are the various aspects of the programme of Islamic Revival (*Tajdid*):–

1. Diagnosis of the current ailments: to examine thoroughly the circumstances and conditions of the time and ascertain exactly where, how and to what extent 'Ignorance' has crept in, what and where are its roots and what position Islam occupies at the time.
2. Scheme for reformation: to determine exactly where to strike the blow so as to break the power of un–Islam and enable Islam to take hold of life as a whole.
3. Estimation of one's limitations and resources: to weigh and estimate power at one's disposal and determine the line of action for bringing about reforms.
4. Intellectual revolution: to share the ideas, beliefs and moral viewpoints of the people into the Islamic mould, reform the system of education and revive the Islamic science and attitudes in general.
5. Practical reforms : to eradicate evil customs, cleanse morals, regenerate the spirit of practising the *Shariah,* and prepare men capable for Islamic leadership.
6. *Ijtihad* : to comprehend the fundamental principles of Religion, judge contemporary culture and its trends from the Islamic viewpoint, and determine the changes to be effected in the existing patterns of social life under the *Shariah* with a view to attaining its ends and enabling Islam to assume world–leadership in the reformed social set–up.
7. Defence of Islam : to encounter political forces seeking to suppress and finish Islam and break their power in order to make Islam a living force.

8. Revival of Islamic System : to wrest authority from the hands of un–Islam and practically re–establish government on the system described as "Caliphate after the pattern of Prophethood" by the the Holy Prophet.
9. Universal Revolution : not to rest content with establishing Islamic system in one or more countries already inhabited by the Muslims, but to initiate such a strong universal movement as may spread the reformative and revolutionary message of Islam among mankind at large, and enable Islam to become a predominant cultural force in the world and capture the moral, intellectual and political leadership of mankind.

A study of these aspects will show that the first three items of the programme are such as must necessarily be carried out by any person who intends to work for the Revival of Islam. As regards the other six items their satisfactory accomplishment by one and the same person is not a necessary condition for him to become a *mujaddid.* Even if a person is able to perform a work of distinction in one or a couple of these aspects he may be regarded as a *mujaddid.* But such a *mujaddid* will only be a partial *mujaddid* and not an Ideal one. For an Ideal *Mujaddid* can be only such a person as achieves all the objectives detailed above so as to prove himself a true successor to the heritage of prophethood.

THE IDEAL MUJADDID

History reveals that the Ideal *Mujaddid* is yet to be born. Caliph Umar bin Abdul Aziz might have attained this position but he did not get a chance to achieve it. All the *mujaddids* who appeared after him accomplished work in one particular or the other aspect only but none achieved the distinction of becoming the Ideal *Mujaddid.* But reason and nature demand and the trends of the world require that such a "Leader" must be born. Whether he is born in this age or after thousands of decades, he will be Al–Imam–ul–Mehdi whose coming has been clearly foretold by the Holy Prophet in his Traditions.[8]

Some people did not find this name palatable these days. They complain that the state of waiting for a Leader to be born in the future has sapped the ignorant Muslims of their life–energies. Therefore, a fact, they seem to argue, whose wrong interpretation tends to make ignorant people lethargic should not be a fact at all. Moreover, they say, the belief in the coming of "a man from the Unseen" in the future is found among all the religious– minded communities. It is therfore nothing more than a mere superstition. I, however, do not regard this belief improbable. I think that, like the Holy Prophet, other Prophets before him might also have foretold their communities that before the worldly life of the human race comes to an end Islam will emerge as the world–religion, and the disappointed and woe–stricken man after testing all the "isms" of his own making will be constrained to take refuge in the "ism" of Allah, and that this will bcome possible through the efforts of a Great Leader who will work on the pattern set by the Prophets and enforce Islam entirely in its original pure form. After all what is superstitious about such a prophecy ? As regards this belief being found among the other communities, most probably they have

8. Though such prophecies are contained in the collections of Hadith by Muslim, Tirmizi, Ibn–i–Majah and in *Mustadrak*, etc., it will be of interest to reproduce here the Tradition given by Shatibi in *Muwafiqat* and Maulana Ismail Shahid in *Mansab–i–Imamat :* "Your Religion originates from prophethood and Allah's mercy and this will remain among you as long as Allah wills. Then Allah will recall it and replace it by "Caliphate after the pattern of prophethood". Then Allah will bring this to an end. Then it will be succeeded by tyrant kingship which will continue as long as Allah wills. Then Allah will bring it also to an end. Then there will be the reign of terror which will remain as long as Allah wills. Then Allah will bring it also to an end. Then will return the same "Caliphate after the pattern of Prophethood" which will administer the affairs of people according to the *Sunnah* of the Prophet, and Islam will take root in the earth. This rule will please those who belong to the heavens and also those who belong to the earth. When it comes the heavens will generously shower their blessings and the earth will pour out all its treasures." I cannot say what degree of authenticity may be attached to this Tradition, but as regards spirit it conforms to all other Traditions with a similar content. It refers to the five stages of history, three of which have already passed and the fourth one is passing at present. As to the fifth stage mentioned in the prophecy there are clear signs to show that the human history is fast heading towards it. All the man–made "Isms" have been tried out and seem to collapse. Now man in his utter disappointment has been left with no other choice than to turn to Islam.

taken it from the Prophetic Traditions and covered it up with their superstitions and whims.

AL–IMAM–UL–MEHDI

Those Muslims who believe in the coming of Al–Imam–ul–Mehdi are not very different in their misconceptions from the 'innovators' who do not believe in such an event at all. They seem to think that the Mehdi will be an old–fashioned man with the out–dated mystic appearance who will suddenly emerge, one day, rosary in hand, from some *madrasah* or monastery and will forthwith proclaim himself to be the Mehdi. At this the religious leaders and scholars will come out with their books and start checking and comparing his bodily features against the indications given therein, and will finally recognize him. Then *bai'at* will be performed and *Jehad* declared. All the ascetics gone into seclusion and all the living orthodox people of the old type will gather round him under his banner. Sword will be used merely as a token, for the battle will be fought and fields won by spiritual powers and by the use of charms and sacred words. His mere glance will be enough to undo infidels and mere curses sufficient to demolish tanks and aeroplanes.

Such are the ideas of the common man about his belief in the coming of the Mehdi. But as far as I have studied this subject I have found the matter to be just the reverse. In my opinion the coming one will be a most modern Leader of his age possessing an unusually deep insight in all the current branches of knowledge and all the major problems of life. As regards statesmanship, political sagacity and strategic skill in war he will take the whole world by surprise and prove himself to be the most modern of the moderns. But I am afraid that the people who will be the first so called to raise hue and cry against his "innovations" will be the *Ulema* and the Sufis. I also do not expect that his bodily features will be any different from the common man so as to render him easily recognizable. Neither do I expect that he will proclaim himself to be the Mehdi. Most probably he will not be aware of his being the promised Mehdi. People, however, will recognize him after his death from his works to be the one who was to establish

"Caliphate after the pattern of Prophethood" as mentioned in the prophecies. As I have indicated above, none but a Prophet has any right to start his work with a claim, nor does anybody except a Prophet know with certainty the nature of his mission. 'Mehdi–ism' is not something to be claimed, it is rather something to be achieved. People who put forward such claims and those who readily accept them, in fact, betray a serious lack of knowledge and a degraded mentality.

Moreover, my view of the nature of the Mehdi's mission is also different from the views cherished by these people. I do not find any room in his work for supernatural acts, divine inspirations and ascetic and spiritual exercises. I believe that the Mehdi, like any other revolutionary leader, will have to struggle hard and encounter all the obstacles common in this way. He will create a new School of Thought on the basis of pure Islam, change mental attitudes of the people, and initiate a strong movement which will at once be cultural and political. 'Ignorance' will muster all its forces and strength and come out to crush him, but he will eventually put it to rout and establish a powerful Islamic State. On the one hand, it will engender and enforce the real Islamic spirit in all its affairs, and on the other, it will provide an extrordinary impetus to scientific development and progress. As has been indicated in the Tradition, "it will please those who belong to the heavens and also those who belong to the earth. The heavens will generously shower their blessings and the earth will pour out all its treasures."

If the expectation that Islam eventually will dominate the world of thought, culture and politics is genuine, the coming of a Great Leader under whose comprehensive and forceful leadership such Revolution is to come about is also certain. People who look askance at the idea of the coming of such a Leader, their lack of common sense surprises me. When the leaders of iniquity like Lenin and Hitler can appear on the stage of this world, why should the appearence of a Leader of Goodness only be regarded as remote and uncertain ?

CHAPTER 3

Some Great Mujaddids of Islam and their Achievements

Contrary to chronological order, I have already written about the Ideal *Mujaddid* of the future in the foregoing pages in order to acquaint the reader with his high place and position. This will help him appreciate and judge for himself, by comparison, the place and position of the lesser *Mujaddids.* Now I propose to present a brief account of the revivalist work in Islam that has been accomplished up to date.

UMAR BIN ABDUL AZIZ

The first *mujaddid* of Islam was Umar bin Abdul Aziz. Born of a royal family, he grew up to find his father governor of the important province of Egypt. When he came of age he himself was appointed governor under the *Umayyads.* Moreover, he and his family owned the lion's share of the estates bestowed on the royal household by the ruling dynasty. So much so that according to one estimate the annual income of his personal estate alone amounted to fifty thousand *Ashrafis.* Quite naturally, therfore, he lived like a grandee. His food and clothes, conveyance and habits, were like a prince's in a monarchy. Conditions such as these do not in fact bear even the remotest hint of the kind of tasks he was to undertake during his later years. But his mother was the grand–daughter of Hazrat Umar (may God be pleased with him) and he was born hardly fifty years after the death of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him). This was the time when a large number of the Holy Prophet's Companions and the followers of the Companions were still living. His education started with a training in *Hadith* and *Fiqh* and he soon came to be recognised as a first–rate *Mujaddid* and an authority of *Fiqh.* Intellectually, therefore, it was simple for him to know and comprehend the bases of the community life

prevalent in the days of the Holy Prophet and the Rightly-guided Caliphs, and appreciate the nature of the change that had set in at the replacement of Caliphate by monarchy. But on the practical side he found himself confronted with obstacles, as this un-Islamic change had been brought in by his own immediate ancestors. This had resulted in a great many advantages and benefits not only for his kith and kin but also for himself and his children. In such circumstances, the natural demand of his family pride, personal interests and the future well-being of his off spring was that he should rule like a Pharaoh, sacrifice his conscience and knowledge at the altar of material gains, and concern himself less with truth, justice and morality. But when he became 37, the throne fell to his lot by a mere accident, and suddenly he came to realise the great burden of responsibility that had fallen on his shoulders. This accident changed him outright, and he chose Islam against the path of 'Ignorance' so easily and naturally that it seemed as if he had long meditated over it and planned everything.

Though he succeeded to the throne by inheritance, before enlisting the allegiance of the people he declared in clear terms that they were not bound but free to elect anybody they pleased as their Caliph. The people on their part, however, were willing and disposed to elect only him as their Leader and, therefore, he had to assume the responsibilities of Caliphate. No sooner was he seated in authority than he dismissed the false ruling pride, the despotic attitude of the Pharaoahs, the court practices of worldly kings, and all other shows of power and authority and pledged himself to lead the simple life of a Caliph of the Muslims.

Then he turned his attention to the distinctions and privileges that were being enjoyed by the royal household and levelled them down to the status of the common Muslims. All the estates in the possession of the royal family, including his own were returned to the public treasury. All properties, movable and immovable, that had been unlawfully seized were restored to their rightful owners. As a result his personal exchequer suffered a heavy loss. The annual income of 50,000

Ashrafis was reduced to 200. Besides, he regarded it as unlawful to expend even a penny on himself or his family from the public treasury. Nor was he inclined to accept any emoluments for his services as Caliph. In short, his was now a totally changed life. Before assuming Caliphate he enjoyed life like a royal prince. Now he was a completely transformed man.

After setting in order the family and household affairs he turned to reform the system of government. He removed the unjust Governors from office and launched a search for righteous men to replace them. He admonished the government officials who had come to wield unlimited powers over the people's lives, properties and honour and made them adhere to fairplay and justice, ensuring thus the rule of law. He changed the whole policy pertaining to taxation and abolished all the unlawful taxes, including the duty levied on distilleries that had been imposed by the *Umayyads*. He re–organised and reformed the system of collecting *Zakat* and set open the State exchequer for general public works. He compensated and remedied all the injustices which had been administered to the non–Muslims : restored their unlawfully seized worship–houses, released their lands, and granted them their rights and privileges under the *Shariah*. He made the judiciary independent of the executive, removed all the shadows of royal influence which generally cast a slur on the administration of justice, and enforced instead of Islamic principles of equity and fairplay. This is how the Islamic system of Government was revived at the hands of Hazrat Umar bin Abdul Aziz.

Then, by virtue of his political authority, he set about purging the intellectual, moral and social life of the people of all those evil influences which had spread during the un–Islamic rule of about half a century. He checked the propagation of un–Islamic beliefs, made large scale arrangements for education of the masses, and drew attention of the intelligentsia towards the sciences of the *Quran, Hadith* and *Fiqh*, and therby succeeded in generating a powerful intellectual movement which eventually, produced Malik, Shafiee and Ahmed bin Hanbal (may God show His mercy to them all). He revived the

true spirit of practising the *Shariah,* enforced total prohibition, discarded painting and discouraged all ease–loving tendencies that had taken root among the people during the monarchic rule. And thus he achieved the purpose for which Islam endeavours to establish its rule:

> "When We give them authority in the earth, they strive to establish *Salat,* make arrangements for the collection of *Zakat,* enforce good and forbid evil."

So within a short space of time, good effects of the revolution in the system of government began to be felt in the life of the common people within the country as well as on the international level. It is related that during the reign of Waleed, people would meet and talk about buildings and gardens ; under Suleman bin Abdul Malik their main interest was sex ; but when Umar bin Abdul Aziz became Caliph, conditions quickly changed and *Salat,* fasting and the Quran became the popular subjects for conversation. The non–Muslim population was so much impressed by his rule that they embraced Islam in their thousands thus reducing the income from *Jizya* to an extent that the state finances began to be affected. Then the Caliph turned his attention to the neighbouring non–Muslim states and exhorted them to accept Islam which a number of them did.

The chief non–Muslim rival state in those days was the Roman Empire against which Islam had been at arms for a century or so, and this political strife was not yet over. But even Rome was impressed by the high morality displayed by Umar bin Abdul Aziz. When Caliph died, the Roman Emperor is reported to have said:

> "I should not be the least surprised if a monk renounces the world and busies himslef in worship behind closed doors. But I am simply amazed at this man who had a vast empire at his feet, but he rejected it and lived the life of a *Faqir,*"

This first *mujaddid* of Islam worked hard for two and a half years and during this brief period he was able to revolutionise life in all its various aspects. But soon the *Umayyads* turned

against this pious man. They saw their death in the life of Islam and therefore could not possibly tolerate the work of its Revival. They conspired against him and poisoned him at the young age of 39. The work of Revival initiated by him remained deficient only in one respect : he could not replace monarchy by the elective Caliphate. He had this reform in mind and had at occasions given it expression also. But cleansing the social life of the Muslims of the evil influence of the *Umayyads* and at the same time preparing them morally and intellectually to shoulder the responsibilities of Caliphate was too onerous and vast a task to be accomplished within the two years and a half of his righteous rule.

THE FOUR IMAMS

Though after the death of Umar the Second the reins of government again passed into the impious hands and, on the political side, all the good work done by him was flung to the winds, nothing could prevent the Islamic reawakening and the intellectual movement stimulated by him from bearing fruit. Both the whip and the wealth of the Umayyads and of the Abbasides came in the way of this movement; both failed to check its progress. Under its influence good deal of valuable work was done in the sciences of the Quran and *Hadith, Ijtihad* and works of compilation were undertaken; details of Islamic law were deduced from the fundamentals of Religion ; and almost all the rules and regulations which are needed to organise a vast social system were fully worked out on the Islamic pattern. This work started in the beginning of the second century A.H. and continued vigorously until the fourth century.

The *mujaddids* of this period were the four celebrated *Imams*[9] to whom are ascribed the four famous Schools of Islamic jurisprudence (*Fiqh*). Though there lived a large number of other *mujtahids* besides them, certain specific reasons place

9. Imam Abu Hanifa : 80 A.H. to 150 A.H. (699 A.D. to 767 A.d.); Imam Malik : 95 A.H. to 179 A.H. (714 A.D. to 798 A.D.); Imam Shafiee : 150 A.H. to 240 A.H. (767 A.D. to 854 A.D.); Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal : 164 A.H. to 241 A.H. (780 A.D. to 855 A.D.)

them above these *mujtahids* and entitle them to be called the *mujaddids* of Islam.

First, these *Imams* by virtue of their deep insight and extraordinary intellectual powers founded such powerful schools of religious thought that their strong stimulation continued producing *mujtahids* even till the eight century A.H. They also evolved profound principles of universal application for working out details from the fundamentals of Islam for applying the rules of the *Shariah* to the practical problems of life. It can be safely asserted that all the later works in the way of *Ijtihad* were conducted in the light of these principles and that no *mujtahid* of the future will ever care to lose sight and proceed independently of the guidance afforded by these principles.

Second, they did all this independently and without any sort of help from the government. On occasions they had even to ward off official interference in order to pursue their work peacefully. In this connection they had to undergo unimaginable hardships and persecutions. Imam Abu Hanifa was whipped and imprisoned both by the Umayyads and the Abbasides and was eventually poisoned. Imam Malik was awarded 70 lashes during the reign of Al-Mansoor, the Abbaside, and was tied so tightly that his hand was pulled out from the arm. Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal was tortured many times in the days of al-Mamun, Mutasim and Wathiq and was flogged in a manner too cruel even for camels and elephants. But when Mutawakkil succeeded to the throne, conditions took the reverse shape. The *Imam* began to be so highly esteemed and honoured with all sorts of kingly gifts and presents that he painfully cried out:

"It is harder on me than the lash and imprisonment."

Despite all these hardships, these revered men did not allow the royal influence to impede or affect their work of compilation and research in the Islamic sciences. Thus they were able to set such a pattern by their personal example that even after their death the work of *Ijtihad* and compilation remained immune from court interference for quite some time. It is indeed the result of their labour and perseverence that all the authoritative

works on the Quran and Islamic law and all the authentic collections of *Hadith* that have reached us, have remained wonderfully pure and untained throughout centuries. These works have been trasmitted from generation to generation but during the transit have neither been affected by the selfish motives of the self-seeking kings and chiefs nor by the moral, intellectual and social degeneration of the Muslim peoples.

IMAM GHAZALI

After the death of Umar bin Abdul Aziz, the reins of government passed into the hands of 'Ignorance' permanently and the political authority was at last transferred to the Turkish Kings through the Umayyads and the Abbasides. The service rendered by these successive governments was briefly this : on the one hand, they completely accepted the un-Godly philosophic systems of Greece, Rome and other non-Muslim nations without question and spread them unaltered among the Muslims ; and on the other, they propagated all sorts of evils found in the un-Godly societies and their arts and sciences by virtue of their authority and wealth. Then the decadence of the Abbaside rule engendered one more weakness. As time passed, the rulers succeeding the early Abbaside Caliphs came to be more and more unaware of the Islamic arts and sciences. So much so that they could not even select and appoint capable persons to legal and judicial posts. Owing to their ignorance and an inherent love of ease they wanted to enforce the injunctions of the *Shariah* mechanically without realising the needs of an evolving and growing society. For this purpose the way of rigid conformity suited them best. Besides this, the world-seeking *Ulema* were able to divert their attention towards debates on topics of religious interest for which they soon developed a morbid liking.

With the passage of time, this tendency, owing to the impulse it received from the royal patronage, became so widespread that it produced quite a few of new sects in the Muslim countries, give rise to acute difference of opinion, and

led the common Muslims to many a serious quarrel and mishap. As a matter of fact, these so–called religious discussions were nothing more than means of entertainment for the chiefs and courtiers in the nature of cock–fighting and partridge–fighting, but for the Muslim people they proved to be scissors which cut into pieces their religious unity. General conditions prevailing in the fifth century may be summed up as follows:

1. Propagation of Greek philosophy had upset the very foundation of the religious beliefs of the people. The scholars of *Hadith* and the jurists, being unfamiliar with the rationalistic sciences, were at a loss to explain and interpret the Isalmic system in terms of the contemporary trends of thought, and could do nothing except resort to suppression of the evils by curses and censure. On the contrary, the people who were renowned in the rationalistic sciences, not only possessed no insight in the religious branches of knowledge, but also had acquired no creative mastery of the imported thought. They were merely the camp–followers of the Greek philosophers. Not even a single person among them had the ability to study and examine critically the imported Greek ideas and philosophy. Therefore, they took the Greek revelation for granted and instead, began distorting the Divine Revelation with a view to moulding it according to the dictates of the former. These circumstances not only caused the common people to view Islam as something irrational but also gave them the impression that its whole system was too tender to encounter and stand the test of reason. Imam Abul Hasan Ash'ari and his followers strove hard to check this growing trend but they could not meet with success. For though they commanded the necessary scholastic skill, they were not fully aware of and trained in the rational sciences. In their enthusiasm, therefore, to oppose the Mutazalites they went rather too far and took it upon themselves to prove and establish certain things which in fact did not belong to true Faith.

2. Owing to the influence exercised by the 'ignorant' rulers and the lack of facilities for the dissemination of the religious sciences, the fountain–heads of *Ijtihad* dried up giving way to rigid conformity. Religious differences became so widespread and acute that new sects were formed on minor differecne of opinion and the mutual quarrels of these sects led the Muslims to a state which has been described in the Holy Quran thus:

"You were on the very brink of an abyss of fire."

3. A general moral degeneration had set in from the East to the West in all the Muslim countries involving all the classes of society. The collective life of the people did not bear any impression of the guidance of the Quran and the example of the Holy Prophet. The *Ulema*, the ruling chiefs and the masses, all had turned their back on the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of the Prophet and cared little to see whether these had anything to offer in the way of guidance for solving their problems.
4. The lives of luxury led by the ruling few and the wars waged by them for wealth and greed had caused a grave economic set–back to the masses, and the levying of undue taxes had made their lives all the more miserable. The sciences and crafts that really help and strengthen a civilization were on the decline; whereas only those arts were being cultivated and developed which, though immoral and anti–social, received encouragement from the royal courts. In short, the general trends of the times were symptomatic of a catastrophe towards which the Muslim people were heading rapidly.

Such were the conditions when in the middle of the fifth century (A.H.) Imam Ghazali[10] was born. In his early days he received the some sort of education as was considered useful

10. Born in 450 A.H. (1058 A.D.) and died in 505 A.H. (1111 A.D.).

and beneficial from the worldly point of view and attained perfection in the branches of knowledge which stood in great demand. Then he took himself to the market and rose to the highest position imaginable by a scholar in those days. He was appointed rector of the greatest university of the time—the *'Nizamiah'* of Baghdad, and was soon able to acquire great influence and trust in the courts of Nizam–ul–Mulk Tusi, Malik Shah Saljuki and the "Caliph" of Baghdad. He was held in such high esteem in political circles that his services were generally obtained to settle disputes arising between the Saljuk Ruler and the Abbaside Caliph. He had attained such heights when suddenly his life took a new turn. The impression of this change in the mind deepened as he viewed the intellectual, moral, religious, political and cultural life of his age, and the impulse of the revolt began over–powering him with increasing intensity everyday. His conscience became more and more explicit in its assertion that he was not born to receive and rest content with worldly applause and honour only, but had different duty to perform. At last, he renounced the honour, material gains and the worldly activities and left the world to travel and meditate like a hermit in cells and forlorn places. He visited the Muslim masses and studied their life and circumstances at first hand, and spent long periods in exerting himself and worshipping with a view to purifying his soul. The activities engaged him for ten long years and when he returned home at the age of 48, he was a completely transformed man. What he did after all these meditations and observations was that he severed himself from the royal courts, resolved to give up prejudicial attitude in discussion and refused to accept stipends and work in the educational institutions under the government. Instead, he established an independent institution in Tus, where he wanted to train capable and selected individuals on his own lines. But this effort of his could not produce the desired results as death did not allow him to work for more than five or six years.

Here is a brief account of the work of Revival carried out by Imam Ghazali:

First, he studied Greek thought with great intellectual acumen and subjected it to such a searching criticism that its grip on the Muslim mind was considerably loosened. Those who had taken Greek speculations to be based on reality and were endeavouring to defend Revelation against their onslought by showing that the two were identical, were helped to understand the Truth in the correct perspective. The impact of this criticism was too strong to remain confined to the Muslims territory only, but soon crossed over into Europe and did much in that Continent to blot out the deep–rooted impression of Greek thought and helped open the door to the age of modern research and enlightenment.

Second, he corrected the mistakes of those people who in their enthusiasm to defend Islam were fighting the philosophers and the scholastics without necessary weapons of rationalism. These people were in fact committing the same kind of absurdities as were committed by the priest–folk of Europe later on viz., to start with the hypothesis that rational proofs of religious beliefs depend on some clearly irrational bases, then to regard such hypotheses as part of the creed and declare a person an un–believer if he does not believe in them, and to consider every argument, experiment or observation as dangerous to religion if by its application these unreal hypotheses seem to be refuted. This very thing had eventually pushed the whole of Europe into the lap of atheism and the same disease was now eating into the vitals of the Muslim community and causing it to become sceptical of religious beliefs. Imam Ghazali checked this trend in time and impressed upon the Muslims that the affirmation of their religious beliefs was in no way dependent on the necessity of those irrational hypotheses but had their own sound logical grounds.

Third, he presented such a rational interpretation of the fundamental beliefs of Islam that their validity could not be questioned on rationalistic grounds for centuries afterwards. Besides this, he explained the secrets and merits of the injunctions of the *Shariah* and gave the people such a clear conception

of Islam that their doubts whether it could stand the test of reason were completely despelled.

Fourth, he examined all the religious sects of his time and their differences and carefully marked the boundaries between Islam and un–Islam, set bounds within which freedom of interpretation was allowed, and indicated limits transgression of which meant heresy. He also pointed out the real Islamic beliefs distinguishing them from the false ones. These efforts went a long way indeed in quietening the fronts between the warring sects as well as in broadening the outlook of the common people.

Fifth, he revived the understanding of Islam, deplored blind faith, opposed rigid conformity, and drew the peoples' attention towards the real sources of guidance, viz., the Book of Allah and the *Sunnah* of His Prophet. He re–vitalised the spirit of *Ijtihad,* and criticised all the sects for their weaknesses and un–Islamic leanings and urged them towards reform.

Sixth, he criticised the decaying system of education and proposed a new system to replace it. The prevalent system had developed two major defects: (a) it segregated the sciences of the world from the sciences of Islam which inevitably resulted in the segregation of mundane from religious affairs—a trend unwholesome from the Islamic viewpoint, (b) certain things which had no place in the *Shariah* were included in the curriculum as if they were a part of the *Shariah.* Thus the educational institutions were infusing wrong notions into the peoples' minds about Islam and were indirectly helping in the creation of new sects. Imam Ghazali exposed these defects and prepared an integrated system which, though fiercely opposed by his contemporaries, was eventually accepted in all the Muslim countries. All the systems of education which were later conceived in various countries were in fact worked out on the lines indicated by the Imam. So much so that the curricula of studies prevalent in the present–day Arabic institutions owe their inception to Imam Ghazali.

Seventh, he subjected the general moral condition of the people to a thorough examination. In his early days, he had fully

availed himself of the opportunities for studying the lives of the religious scholars and leaders, ruling chiefs, kings and the masses, and had travelled far and wide and seen for himself the conditions prevailing in most of the Eastern countries. His magnum opus *Ihya–ul–Uloom–ud–Din* (Revivification of the Sciences of Islam) was the outcome of these experiences and observations. In this book the Imam has severely criticised the moral condition of all classes of the society and traced each abuse to its psychological and social causes, and tried to present the true moral criterion of Islam.

Eighth, he freely criticised the prevalent system of government, urged officials by direct contact towards reform and infused the masses with a will not to be cowed down by coercion but have courage to resist and criticise oppression. In *Ihya–ul–Uloom* he clearly says :

"In our days most of the estates of kings have been unlawfully acquired."

At another place he writes, "No one should show one's face to these 'sultans', nor should one see their face. One should hate them for their oppression, deplore their existence, refrain from praising them, have nothing to do with them and also keep away from those who have an access to them." At yet another place he criticises fiercely the servile attitude and humiliating customs current in the royal courts and exposes the ways of life adopted by kings and their courtiers. In this regard he even goes to the extent of declaring their palaces, their robes, their decorations, etc, to be filthy and impious. Not only that : he has urged a ruler of his time in a letter to establish the Islamic system of government, has explained to him the responsibilities of a ruler and warned him that he would be held accountable for all the cruelties and acts of oppression being perpetrated in his kingdom either by himself or by his officials.

Once he was obliged to visit a royal court against his wish. In the course of conversation he told the king in his very face:

"Your extravagant tastes might not have lessened your grandeur but their unbearable burden has most surely broken the backs of the common people."

In his later days he wrote letters to almost all the ministers appointed from time to time warning them about the miserable condition of the people. To one of them he wrote : "Oppression and tyranny have crossed all limits. Since I had to see all this with my own eyes I left Tus about a year ago, so that I might be relieved of the pain inflicted by the merciless and shameless acts committed by the tyrants."

According to Ibn–i–Khaldun, the Imam was very keen to see a government working on Islamic principles anywhere in the world. It is said that the government of the "Muwahids " in the Far West (Africa) was established by one of his pupils under his guidance. But this political aspect of the life activity of the Imam has only a secondary importance. As a matter of fact, he did not initiate any movement with a view to bringing about a political revolution, nor could he bring even the barest influence to bear upon the system of government of his time. After him the general condition of the Muslim people deteriorated still further under the yoke of un–Islamic rule, until a century later the Tartar deluge burst open upon the Muslim countries bringing to complete ruin and destruction the whole Muslim culture and civilization.

Judged from the intellectual viewpoint, the work of Revival carried out by Imam Ghazali suffered in general from three main defects which may be ascribed to :

(a) his weakness in the science of *Hadith* [11]

(b) the predominant influence of the rationalist sciences on his mind, and

(c) his undue inclination towards *tasawwuf*

The man who, avoiding all these pitfalls, carried forward the real work of Imam Ghazali. viz., reviving the moral and intel-

11. Taj–ud–Din Subki has collected all such traditions in his *Tabaq at–u–Shafiyyah* that have been cited by the Imam in his *Ihya–ul–Uloom* but which cannot be traced to any source. (See *Tabaqat,* Vol. IV, Pp. 145–182).

lectual spirit of Islam and purging its system of all innovations and impurities, was Imam Ibn–i– Taimiyyah.

IMAM IBN–I–TAIMIYYAH

Imam Ibn–i–Taimiyyah was born in the second half of the seventh century A.H.[12] after about 150 years of the death of Imam Ghazali. It was the time when the Tartar hordes had trampled under feet and routed all the Muslim nations living from the banks of the Indus to the plains of the Euphrates and were then advancing towards Syria. Continued defeats and humiliation suffered for fifty long years, a prolonged state of fear and anarchy and the destruction of their centres of learning and culture had all combined to bring about a degeneration among the Muslim people quite unknown in the time of Ghazali.Though the Tartar invaders were gradually embracing Islam, they were even worse than their predecessor Turkish kings in un–Islamic ways and customs. Under their evil influence, therefore, the moral condition of all classes of the society, even of the religious leaders, jurists and judges, began to be adversely affected.[13] Rigid conformity

12. (Born in 661 A.H. (1262 A.D.) and died in 728 A.H. (1327 A.D.)

13. The moral condition of the religious leaders of those days can be gauged from the fact that when Halaku Khan asked for their verdict as to who was superior between an un–believing just king and a believing unjust ruler, they pronounced unhesitatingly in favour of the former. The condition of the ruling chiefs was even worse. They had enforced two different categories of laws in the Muslim province comprising modern Egypt and Syria that had remained immune from the Tartar onslaught. One was the personal law which applied to the restricted sphere of marriage, divorce and inheritance only, and in this sphere judgements were passed in accordance with the *Shariah*. The other was the law of the land which dealt with the criminal and civil cases and the administration of the country. This was wholly based on the customs and ages of Chengiz Khan. Moreover, whatever personal law under the *Shariah* was in force, it was only meant to affect the common people. The ruling class was exempt from it. In spite of professing Islam, they preferred to follow the *Tora* of Chengiz Khan even in their private lives as against the *Shariah* of the Holy Prophet. Their un–Islamic attitudes and trends have been clearly mentioned by Maqrizi who says that they had no objection to setting up of brothels, and had levied taxes on prostitution the proceeds of which were paid into the public treasury of their "Islamic State". Most of Ibn–i–Taimiyyah's contemporary Ulema and Sufis were stipendiaries of the state. These people had become so oblivious and neglectful of the Religion of Allah that they were not at all sensitive to its most treacherous and shameless violation by the rulers. But when Ibn–i–Taimiyyah rose for reforms, they raised a great hue and cry against him, vilified and slandered him and declared him to have lost the Right Way.

(Taqlid) became the order of the day ; so much so that it helped turn the juristic and scholastic schools of thought into independent and mutually exclusive sects,[14] *Ijtihad* was regarded as sinful, and non–sensical innovations were willingly accepted as part of the *Shariah*. No body could dare invite the peoples' attention towards the Book of Allah and the *Sunnah* of His prophet for fear of calumny. The ignorant and perverted masses, world–worshipping and narrow–minded 'Ulema and the cruel and barbarous rulers had all joined hands to form a wicked trio against which it was no easy job to raise a voice for reforms. Though at this time there lived a number of right–thinking *Ulema* and quite a few of true and genuine Sufis who walked the straight path, the man who raised the banner for reforms in that dark age was only one, Ibn–i–Taimiyyah.

Ibn–i–Taimiyyah possessed deep insight into the Quran. According to Hafiz Zehbi "explaining and interpreting the Quran rightly was a Divine endowment to Ibn–i–Taimiyyah." He had acquired the status of an *Imam* in the science of *Hadith;* so much so that according to some a *Hadith* could not be held as authentic if it was not known to and supported by Ibn–i–Taimiyyah. In the science of Islamic Jurisprudence he had been duly recognised as an absolute authority. In the rationalist sciences of logic, philosophy and scholasticism he could easily surpass and outwit the contemporary experts in these subjects. Moreover, he had acquired such an insight into the jewish and Christian literatures and the differences between their religious sects that, according to Goldziher, no scholar who wanted to deal with the

(Contd.from page 59)

They even pronounced him a renegade, a bitter enemy of the Sufis and *Tasawwuf,* one disrespectful of the Companions of the Holy Prophet and the early *Imams,* and an innovator in Religion. On these charges, they even disallowed people to offer prayers under his leadership and declared that his books and writings were fit to be destroyed by fire.

14. One instance would be enough to show this. The founder of the *Madrasah–i–Rawahiya* at Damascus had willed that the Jews, Christians and Hanbalites could not be admitted to his *Madrasah.* This shows that minds had become so perverted by the juristic and scholastic disputes in matters of detail that an Asharite and a follower of Imam Shafi'ee could freely bracket the followers of Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal with the Jews and Christians.

persons of the Bible could lose sight of and set aside the researches of Ibn–i–Taimiyyah. Besides his unusually high status in the field of learning, he was never deterred by any worldly authority in the matter of laying open the truth. On this account he was sent behind the bars several times, and eventually breathed his last in the jail. Thus he was able to carry forward and complete quite successfully the work left incomplete by Imam Ghazali.

The work of Revival accomplished by Imam Ibn–i–Taimiyyah may be summed up as follows:–

1. He subjected Greek logic and philosophy to a more searching and severer criticism than had been done by Imam Ghazali, and exposed its fallacies and weaknesses so clearly that it lost most of its importance in the rationalistic field almost permanently. The impact of this criticism was so strong that it soon made itself felt even in the West. But the Aristotelian logic and the Hellenic system of philosophy followed and cherished by the Christian scholastics held such a sway in Europe that the Imam's criticism took about 250 years to bear fruit in the form of the first intellectual revolt against Greek thought on the Continent.
2. He provided such strong arguments in support of the Islamic beliefs and injunctions as were more rational and in greater conformity with the spirit of Islam than those supplied by Imam Ghazali. The reasoning of Imam Ghazali suffered from an unusually strong rationalistic bias ; whereas Ibn–i– Taimiyyah chose the common sense way of interpreting and explaining the secrets of Islam which was clearly more natural, more effective and more akin to the spirit of the Quran and *Sunnah.* His was, therefore, a unique approach. People who were well–versed in Religion could only quote injunctions but did not know how to explain and interpret them. On the contrary, those who were given to scholasticism adopted the philosophic and

rationalistic method to interpret Islam and thus ran the risk of losing contact with the real spirit of the Book of Allah and the *Sunnah* of His Prophet. Only Ibn–i–Taimiyyah had the distinction of explaining the Islamic beliefs and injunctions in their right perspective and with their true import. For this purpose he adopted such a natural and straightforward method that even reason and intellect had to acclaim and recognize it. It was in recognition of this great achievement of his that Allama Zehbi, the distinguished scholar of *Hadith*, wrote:

"Ibn–i–Taimiyyah endorsed nothing but the pure *Sunnah* and the way of the early *Imams* and brought such arguments in support thereof with such a fresh approach as had never occurred to any scholar before him."

3. He not only raised a strong voice against rigid conformity *(Taqlid)* but successfully undertook *Ijtihad* also in the manner of the early religious doctors. He drew inspiration direct from the Book and the *Sunnah*, and the lives of the Companions, studied the various schools of juristic thought with a critical eye and deduced and established great many injunctions. Thus he was able to set open the gate of *Ijtihad* and demonstrated precisely how to use and exploit fully one's abilities in that field. Besides him, his great pupil Hafiz Ibn–i–Qayyam concentrated his energies on unravelling the wisdom behind Islamic legislation and produced unparallelled work on the Legislator's way and technique of law–making in Islam. This unique work has been serving as a beacon light for those who undertook *Ijtihad* in the past and will continue serving this great purpose in the future also.
4. He put a tough fight against innovations in Religion, polytheistic customs, moral and social abuses of his day and had to undergo persecutions in this connection. He

cleansed Islam of all impurities, purged its system of all shades of evil and presented it afresh before the world in its original pure form. He did not spare any person, however big and respectable in his criticism. Even those people who enjoyed unqualified veneration and respect with the masses of the people could not remain immune from his critical attacks. Wrong customs and practices which had been accepted as part of Islam for centuries, for which religious sanction had been obtained and to which even the *Ulema* had closed their eyes were ruthlessly attacked by Ibn–i–Taimiyyah. This straight and independent thinking and sharp outspokenness of his turned a whole world against him. So much so that even at present Ibn–i–Taimiyyah is remembered in a manner not very kind and pleasant. Most of his contemporaries who felt offended by him got him tried and sent to jail several times. Those who came after him slandered and ex–communicated him posthumously to pacify their fury. But the fact is that the cry raised by him of following and practising the true and pure faith generated a powerful movement which can still be heard reverberating in the world of Islam.

Besides this work of Revival, he took up the sword also against the vandalism and barbarity of the Tartars. He strongly appealed to the human sentiments of the common and leading Muslims of Egypt and Syria which were yet safe from the impending disaster and aroused their sense of honour and self–respect to face it with courage and valour. It is related that the common people were so unnerved that they would shudder at the mere mention of the Tartars and trembled to face them "as if they were being driven to death." But Ibn–i–Taimiyyah infused into them the spirit of *Jihad* and stirred up their valour and confidence. The fact, however, is that he could not initiate a political movement which could revolutionise the prevalent system of government and result in the transfer of power from barbarism to Islam.

SHEIKH AHMAD OF SIRHIND

The Tartar deluge ravaged and laid waste the entire Muslim World in the seventh century A.H. except the Indo–Pak sub–continent. The epicureans of these countries, like all other epicureans, did not heed this warning at all and persisted in their evil ways. All the weaknesses and signs of depravity prevalent in Khurasan and Iraq could also be found here: assumption of the sovereign and absolute rights by Kings, ease–loving and indulgent lives led by the courtiers, hoarding of wealth by unlawful means and expending it in unjustifiable ways, the rule of tyranny and coercion, forgetfulness of God and desertion of the Right Path, so on and so forth. This lawlessness from the religious viewpoint eventually reached its climax during the reign of Akbar when degeneration touched its last limits.

The common feeling in the court of Akbar about Islam was that its culture was born among the ignorant nomads of Arabia, and therefore, it did not suit the requirements of a civilised and refined society. Prophethood, Revelation, Resurrection, Hell, and Heaven all were slighted and assailed. The Quran's being the Word of God and the possibility of Revelation was doubted: punishment or reward after death was held uncertain; ascension of the Holy Prophet was openly regarded as improbable; and the person of the Holy Prophet was freely made the object of criticism, especially for his polygamy and the holy wars he waged. So much so that the words *Ahmed* and *Muhammad* were resented and disused, and names which contained these words began to be changed. The world–seeking *Ulema* gave up the practice of using words of adoration and reverence for the Holy Prophet in their sermons and writings. Some went to such an extent of perfidy and treachery that they began labelling the person of the Holy Prophet with the indications of *Dajjal*[15] (we seek the mercy of Allah and

15. That is, Anti–Christ according to Christian belief. – Tr.

His forgiveness). No body could dare offer prayers within the precincts of the King's palace. Abul Fazal, the trusted courtier of Akbar, ridiculed Islamic prayer, fasting, pilgrimage to the Ka'abah and other Islamic injunctions and passed disparaging remarks against them. The poets satirized these injunctions and their derogatory verses reached the masses of the people as well.

The Bahai theory was first of all propounded during the time of Akbar. According to this theory the time-limit of a thousand years allowed to Islam had elapsed since the mission of the Prophet, and therefore, this Religion automatically stood redundant, and needed to be replaced by a fresh creed. This idea was circulated and diffused on a large scale by coins which were the most powerful means of propagation in those days. Then eventually a new religion with a new *"Shariah"* was initiated with the sole purpose of producing an amalgam of Hindu and Muslim ideologies in order to strengthen and consolidate the Mughal Empire. The flattering Hindu courtiers, in order to please the Emperor, began citing prophecies made by their saints, saying that a King with a great soul would be born who would protect the cow. The Muslim scholars tried to prove that Akbar was the promised Mehdi, the 'temporal Sovereign' and above all an *Imam-i-Mujtahid.* One renowned "mystic" from among the courtiers came out to proclaim Akbar as the 'Perfect Man', the 'Caliph of the Times' and the 'Reflection of God' on the earth. The common people were made to believe that justice and truth are universal values common to all religions, and therefore, no one religion could lay a sole claim to these values. Hence, it was thought expedient to initiate a comprehensive creed containing all the merits and good points of the various religions, so that people of all shades of opinion and faith might willingly embrace it and forget their sectarian and communal differences. This unifying faith was christened *Deen-i-Ilahi,* and its fundamental article was proposed to be *La-Ilah Illallah, Akbar Khalifa-tu-Allah* (there is none worthy of worship except Allah ; Akbar is the vicegerent of Allah). People who embraced this new faith had to openly

forsake the "traditional and hypothetical Islam heard and seen from the ancestors", and solemnly enter Emperor Akbar's *Deen–i–Ilahi*. The converts were known as *Chelas*. The way of greeting was also changed. The one greeting would say *Allah–o–Akbar* and the reply would be *Jalla Jalal–o–Hu*. These words, it may be recalled, were derived from the Emperor's name, Jalal–ud–Din–Akbar. The *Chelas* were instructed to wear the King's likeness on their turbans. King–worship was one of the basic injunctions, which was practically carried out in the early morning hours by securing a glimpse of the Emperor's appearance. When somebody was favoured with the permission to appear in the King's presence, he would first prostrate himself before him. Even the so–called *Ulema* and Sufis would prostrate themselves before the Emperor as if he was the "Granter" of their prayers and appeals. They would try to hide this clear heresy of theirs under covers of words like *Sijdah–i–Tahiyyah* (prostration to express reverence) and *Zamin bosee* (Kissing the ground). These were, in fact, the same accursed artifices and tricks which had been clearly mentioned by the Holy Prophet in his prophecies, saying that a time would come when people would change the names of unlawful things to make them lawful.

This new religion was founded with the claim that it would embody all the merits of all the religions without prejudice. But in reality, it was intended to favour all religions to the complete exclusion of Islam and to repudiate its injunctions and principles with all sorts of curses and hatred. Fireworship was borrowed from the Zoroastrians and arrangements were made to keep fire always burning in the royal palace. The court would rise up to observe the rites ordained for the evening hour when the lamps and candles were lit. "Ringing of bells", "worship of the images of Trinity" and certain other rites were adopted from the Christians. The most favoured creed, however, was Hinduism, because it was the religion of the majority of the country's population, which had to be consoled and won over for the purpose of consolidating the Empire. Cow–slaughter was prohibited. The Hindu festivals of Divali, Dussehra,

Rakhi, Poonam, Shivratri, etc., were celebrated with full enthusiasm; and *'hawan'* was regularly performed in the palace. The sun was worshipped four times a day and its one thousand names were repeated with full religious devotion, when somebody uttered a name of the sun, others would say "Be it glorified." The forehead was adorned with *'qashqa'*, sacred thread was worn round the shoulder; and cow was held in high esteem. The theory of the transmigration of souls was fully accepted and many other beliefs were incorporated from the Brahmins. This is how the other religions were favoured, but as regards Islam it was treatd with scorn and derision by the Emperor and his courtiers. Anything derogatory to Islam that was presented in a philosophic or mystic way in keeping with the court's atmosphere was accepted as a revelation from Heaven and the real teachings of Islam were scoffed at and rejected. If the *Ulema* represented true Islam or disapproved of some evil trend, they were branded *Faqeeh* which in the court terminology was a synonym for 'a stupid person worthy of little notice.' A board of forty members was commissioned by a royal decree to undertake the critical study of all religions. It is related that these members were highly tolerant rather respectful during their investigations towards other religions but they would openly hold Islam and its teachings to ridicule; and if a supporter of Islam wanted to speak he was silenced. In practice, the Islamic injunctions were freely rejected or subjected to shameful amendments. Usuary, gambling and drinking were made lawful. Wine became a 'must' at the occasion of *Nauruz* when even the judges and jurists would freely drink. Shaving the beard became a common fashion and its justifcation was reasoned out from the *Shariah.* To marry a cousin was held unlawful. The age of marriage for a boy and a girl was fixed at 16 and 14 years respectively. Polygamy was prohibited and use of silk and gold was permitted. Eating the flesh of tiger and wolf became lawful. The swine, contrary to Islamic teachings, was held to be a clean and sacred animal. So much so that securing a glimpse of it early in the morning was held auspicious. Dead bodies, instead of being buried, were either burnt or disposed of in

running water. If some one insisted on burying a body, he was obliged to keep the feet of the corpse towards the *Qiblah* in the grave. The Emperor himself was pleased to sleep with his feet towards the Ka'abah in clear contravention of the Islamic principle. The educational policy of government was also in complete defiance of the Islamic spirit. The teaching of Arabic and of Islamic Jurisprudence and Traditions was held in disfavour, and those who acquired these sciences were regarded as low and backward. On the contrary, government patronised philosophy, mathematics, history and such other subjects of purely worldly interest. In the matter of language a strong and growing tendency prevailed towards adopting Sanskritised Hindi, and Arabic words were gradually discarded. Under such trying circumstances religious institutions began to be deserted and religious scholars were obliged to leave the country.

The condition of the masses was even worse. Immigrants from Iran and Khurasan had brought with them all their moral and social abuses, and those who had entered the fold of Islam within India had not been well looked after and trained to imbibe the real spirit and culture of Islam. Their practical life, therefore, was still un–Islamic in almost all detail. The social life of these two categories of the Muslims produced a strange admixture of incoherent cultures which they labelled "Islamic culture". It embodied idolatry, racial and class distinctions, whims and superstitions, and above all a code of newly invented rituals and custmos. The world–seeking *Ulema* and the religious guides not only put up with this "ism" but readily became its adherents and priests. People would bring their offerings before them and they in return would inspire and bless them with acute sectarian differences.

The spiritual leaders were causing another disease to spread among the common people. They combed neo–Platonism, Stoicism, Mani–ism, and Vedantaism to produce a strange compound of philosophic mysticism which could harldy fit in with the Islamic system of morals and beliefs. The mystic orders were regarded as independent of the Islamic *Shariah* and the private aspect of life was cut asunder from the public

side. As a result, the limits prescribed by Islam for lawful and unlawful were rejected, the religious injunctions were practically violated, and personal whims and desires were made the arbiter in all affairs of life. Thus it became a simple matter to repudiate a laid down injunction or to invest something having no basis, whatever, in the *Shariah* with full legal sanction; to prohibit lawful things and enforce unlawful ones. The more genuine representatives of the mystic orders were no exception for they were under the hypnotic influence of philosophic mysticism whose one interpretation, that of pantheism, had sapped them of life and reality.

Such were the conditions when Hazrat Shaikh Ahmad[16] was born in Sirhind in the early days of Akbar's era. He was bred and brought up among the most pious people of his age who, though unable to counteract the evil trends thriving around them, were steadfast in faith and sincere in action, and as far as possible were urging others also to adhere to the Right Path. Shaikh Ahmad drew his most inspiration and benefit from Hazrat Baqi Billah who was spiritually the most highly developed man of his time. But Shaikh Ahmad himself was a man of no mean capabilities. When he first came into contact with Hazrat Baqi Billah, the latter was so much impressed by him that he wrote to one of his friends:

> "A young man named Shaikh Ahmad has recently arrived from Sirhind. He is knowledgeable and possesses great practical powers. He has moved with me for a few days and on the basis of my observations of him during this period I do expect that in the days to come he will serve as a beacon to the people and illumine the whole world."

This prophecy wholly came true. Though at that time there were living quite a few of truth-loving *Ulema* and true sufis in different parts of India, the one man who came forward with a will to eradicate and put a stop to the abuses of the time and uphold the *Shariah* was Shaikh Ahmad. It was he who put up a

16. Born in 957 A.H. (1563 A.D.) and died in 1034 A.H. (1624 A.D.)

strong resistance against the government policies and strove to revive the true faith. He openly repudiated all the evil trends of the day which had the support of the government and forcefully presented the *Shariah* values which were held in disfavour by the rulers. The government tried to crush him with all the powers at its disposal and even sent him behind the bars, but eventually, he succeeded in suppressing the prevailing evils. Jehangir who imprisoned the Shaikh in the Gwalior Fort for the reason that he had refused to prostrate himself before him became his disciple. Later, the Emperor gave his son Khurram who succeeded to the throne as Shah Jehan also in the spiritual care of Shaikh Ahmad. All this greatly helped Islam for now the government attitude of disrespect and contempt towards this Faith changed into one of reverence. Akbar's *Deen-i-Ilahi* with all the accompanying innovations forged by the court law-makers was stopped. All the amendments and annulments in respect of Islamic injunctions were automatically held null and void. Though the system of government remained monarchical, its attitudes towards the religious sciences and the *Shariah* injunctions became tolerant and respectful. Aurangzeb Alamgir was born about four years after the death of Shaikh Ahmed. It was mostly due to the good influence exercised by the Shaikh that this prince of Taimur's family received an intellectual and moral training that enabled this great grandson of Akbar, the destroyer of the *Shariah,* to become the Preserver of the Faith.

Shaikh Ahmad not only prevented the Muslim government in India from drifting entirely into the hands of 'Ignorance' and put an end to the movement which might well have wholly undone Islam in this sub-continent as early as the seventh century, but two other achievements of distinction also stand to his credit. First, he cleansed the prevalent *Tasawwuf* of all the impurities of philosophic thought and monastic practices and presented the real and pure *Tasawwuf* of Islam. Second, he ruthlessly attacked all the un-Godly customs and practices current among the common people, and initiated a strong movement of practising the *Shariah* under a spiritual guide. This

movement was powerful enough to produce thousands of well trained workers who not only did useful work in different parts of India but reached as far as Central Asia also to reform the morals and beliefs of the people. It is on account of these stupendous achievements that Hazrat Shaikh Ahmad of Sirhind has been acknowledged as a *Mujaddid* of Islam.

CHAPTER 4

The Achievements of Shah Waliullah of Delhi

[17]Shah Waliullah was born after the death of *Mujaddid Alf-i-Thani* (Hazrat Shaikh Ahmad) and four years before the death of Emperor Aurangzeb Alamgir, in the suburbs of Delhi. One is simply amazed when one views the accomplishments of the Shah Sahib against the dark background of his time and wonders how the birth of a man of such deep insight and vast intellect became possible in that age. None can be unaware of the India of Farrukh Siyyar, Muhammad Shah Rangeela and Shah Alam's times. It was in those days that a seer with an independent mind was born who viewed all matters of life from a fresh angle, free from the centuries old social and intellectual prejudices ; and who has left behind him works that do not bear any impression of the times on his language and style, ideas and thoughts, material of research and the conclusions drawn. Even, while going through and turning the pages of his books one does not at all feel that these were written in a place surrounded on all sides by luxury and self-worship, killings and coercion, tyranny and chaos.

Shah Waliullah indeed ranks among the great leaders of human history who by dint of their intellectual powers carve out a clear and straight highway of knowledge and action out of the jungle of confused ideas and thoughts. Thereby, on the one hand, they create a restlessness in the world of mind against the prevalent ideas and customs, and , on the other, they present such a scheme for reconstruction that the resurgence of a movement to eradicate evil and enjoin good and justice becomes inevitable. Seldom have such leaders initiated a movement themselves on the basis of their ideas, and, shat-

17. Born in 1114 A.H. (1703 A.D.) and died in 1176 A.H. (1763 A.D.)

tering the ailing world, built a new one on its debris. History does not present more than a few instances of this. The main task before such leaders seems to have been this that by means of their critical faculty and analytical powers they cleanse the Truth of centuries old misgivings, illumine minds with a new light, smash the wrong but firmly established patterns of life, and present before the world the real and everlasting human values. This task in itself is so vast and onerous that one engaged in it finds little time to come out and undertake practically the work of reconstruction. Shah Waliullah has, nevertheless, pointed out in his *Tafheemat-i-Ilahiya* that if the circumstances demanded he would have taken up arms and practically endeavoured to reform the conditions.[18] But the fact of the matter is that he did not undertake practically any such work of reforms. All his capabilities seem to have been directed towards and absorbed by his heavy undertaking of criticism and reconstruction of religious thought in Islam. This did not spare him time enough to attend to the ailments of his most immediate surroundings. As will be pointed out later, the ground prepared by him needed men capable for practical struggle. And such men did come forth from within his own circle of education and training within half a century.

The reformist work of the Shah Sahib may be divided under two main heads : first, criticism and research ; second, reconstruction. I shall deal with these heads separately.

WORK OF CIRITICISM

In this connection Shah Waliullah has critically reviewed the whole Islamic history. As far as I know the Shah Sahib was the first scholar who ever understood and appreciated the real and fine difference between the history of Islam and the history of Muslims. He, in fact, has studied the history of the Muslims

18. "If the demands of the age in which this man is living were such that conditions could be reformed by fighting and he was accordingly inspired, he would certainly have made all necessary arrangements and taken up arms. He would, thus, have proved himself a leader far superior to Rustam and Isfandyar in the art of war; so much so that Rustam and Isfandyar would have prayed for his grace and help opted to fight under his command willingly."

from the viewpoint of the history of Islam and tried to ascertain exacly the condition of Islam among the communities embracing it at different times. This is a delicate and complicated subject which has embroiled people in the past and even at present they are not clear about it. As a matter of fact, after the passing away of Shah Waliullah there has not since appeared a leader of his calibre who could clearly pointed out this difference at various places in his books, but has specially dwelt on this subject to a considerable length in section VI of his *Izala-tul-Khifa*. The speciality of his work is that side by side with the elucidation of the characteristics of the various ages and their iniquities he has cited and elaborated prophecies of the Holy Prophet containing clear allusions to those times. This critical study has indeed shown up almost all the evil and un-Godly elements which conjoined and corrupted the Muslim beliefs and morals, thoughts and sciences, civilization and political thinking at different stages of our history. Then the Shah Sahib has cast a critical eye on this multitude of evils and tried to trace them down to their sources. At last, as a result of this investigation, he has put his finger on two things :

(a) the transfer of political power from Caliphate to kingship,

(b) the dying away of the spirit of *Ijtihad* and consequent domination of rigid conformity (*Taqlid*) on the minds.

The first source has been fully analysed and discussed by him in the pages of *Izalah*. The difference between the doctrine and concepts of Caliphate and monarchy has been explained by him and illustrated from the Traditions in a manner quite unknown in the early literature of Islam. Similarly his elucidation of the results of this revolution in concept is unique and un-paralelled. At one place he writes:

"The observance of the injunctions of Islam has been disrupted.... No ruler after Hazrat Usman has established *Hajj* personally but has always deputed others for its performance ; whereas the establishment of *Hajj* is one of the essential duties of Caliphate. Just as sitting on the throne, wearing a crown,

and occupying the seat of the early monarchs are the emblems of kingship, similarly establishing *Hajj* under one's personal leaderhip is an emblem of Caliphate."

At another place he writes:

"At one time giving of sermons and religious verdicts both depended on the discretion and consent of the Caliph. But after the passing away of Caliphate both these institutions became free of supervision ; so much so that the passing of a religious verdict was not deemed to stand in need of the counsel of the righteous."

Then he says : "The Government of these people is just like the Government of the *Majusis* with the one difference that these people offer prayers and recite the *Kalimah.* We have been born under the shadow of this change ; God knows what is more in store for us."

As regards the second source of evils, Shah Waliullah has bewailed it in his *Izalah, Hujjah, Badoor-i-Bazighah, Tafheemat-i-Ilahiya, Musawwa,* and *Musaffa* and in almost all his works.

In *Izalah* he writes : "Until the end of the kingdom of Syria (Umayyid rule) none called himself a Hanafite or a Shafi-ite, but all deduce the Shariah injunctions after the method and manner of their respective teachers and leaders. During the kingdom of Iraq (Abassid rule) everyone was known by a special name, and unless they found a strong evidence from the heads of their Schools of Thought, they would not decide a matter on the authority of the Book and *Sunnah.* Thus, the differences that inevitably arise on account of the different interpretations of the Book and the *Sunnah* became firmly established. After the kingdom of Arabia came to end, and the political authority was transferred to the Turkish kings, people who were dispersed in different territories took with them whatever they knew from their juristic schools and made it the basis of their faith. What was before a deduced code of life now came to be regarded as a rigid creed and dogma. All their intellectual efforts were now concentrated

on making deductions from deductions and piling up details upon details.

In *Musaffa* he writes : "The simpletons of our age have given up *Ijtihad*. Camel–like they have a string in their nose and they do not know whither they are going. They have an altogether different engagement. Wretched as they are, they do not have the common sense to understand and appreciate the higher matters of life."

In Chapter VII of *Hujjah*, the Shah Sahib has fully dealt with the history and background of this disease, and has pointed out all those abuses which have sprung out from it.

After historical criticism the Shah Sahib has examined his own age, and frankly pointed out the defects and defaults of each important and responsible member of society. In *Tafheemat* he writes : "This preceptor (i.e., the Shah Sahib himself) has been born in an age when three things have got mixed up among the people:

(1) Sophistry : this is due to the diffusion of the Greek sciences. People have taken to scholastic disputes to an extent that no talk about religious beliefs remains free from wrangles.

(2) Worship of Intuition : this is due to an undue popularity of the Sufis who have enslaved people from the East to the West ; so much so that their sayings and acts wield more authority over the people than the Book and the *Sunnah*. Their mystic allusions and metaphoric references nave become so wide–spread and popular that if a person denies the truth of these or happens to be devoid of these, he cannot gain favour with the people and is not counted among the righteous. No sermon from the religious platforms is free from the Sufistic allusions and no scholar from the educational halls can help expressing his deep faith in the sublimity of these sermons, unless, of course, he is prepared to be counted among donkeys. There is no function patronised or presided over by the ruling

chiefs where the verses and maxims of the Sufis are not a plaything for the sake of recreation, warmth and pleasure.

(3) Obedience (to Allah) : this is due to the fact that people are within the fold of Islam.

Another disease of this age is that everyone follows his own whims, and goes on following them without restraint. Neither does he stop at the figurative verses, nor checks himself from meddling with matters beyond his ken. Everyone is propounding his own interpretations of the secrets and meanings of the injunctions and wrangling with others in favour of his personal viewpoint. Then on account of the difference of opinion that naturally exists between the Hanbalite and the Shafi–ite Schools of juristic thought, each one has become unduly critical of and prejudiced against the other School in favour of one's own. Each sect is over–flowing with details and the Truth has lost itself in the plurality of interpretations."

At another place in the same book he writes : "I ask the descendants of the spiritual guides who have occupied their seats without deserving them : why have you turned Religion into a plaything of your prejudices and whims ? And why have you all abandoned that way of life which was ordained and taught by Allah through His Apostle Muhammad (may Allah's peace be upon him) ? Each one of you has become a self–centred leader and is inviting the people to himself. Each one of you regards himself as rightly–guided and Mehdi ; whereas he has lost the Right Way and is leading others also astray. We cannot approve of the behaviour and attitude of those who seek to enlist the allegiance of the people for the sake of worldly gains and interests, or who acquire knowledge in order to fulfil and meet their mundane desires, or who call the people to themselves and demand of them to serve their lusts and selfishness. They are indeed all dacoits and imposters and liars ; they have decieved themselves and are now deceiving others.

"I say to these seekers after knowledge who are pleased to be called the Ulema : you have got yourselves entangled in the

so–called Greek sciences and grammar and scholasticism, and thought it was true knowledge. The true knowledge, as you must know, are the clear and precise verses of the Book of Allah, or the *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet...you have become unduly absorbed in the legal preferences and details worked out by the early jurists. But is it not a fact that only that command has a legal sanction which has been ordained by Allah and His Apostle ? Most of you are such that if a Tradition from the Holy Prophet reaches one of you, he does not act on it, but says that he follows such and such *Imam*, and not the Traditions. Then he justifies his stand, saying : "The appreciation of the Traditions and taking decisions in accordance with them were reserved for the great scholars of *Hadith*. It is improbable that the Tradition is question escaped their notice, but they must have rejected it for sound reasons." Be aware that this is not the way of true Faith. If you sincerely believe in your Prophet, you must obey him also whether it goes in favour of your School of thought or against it.

"I say to these mystic preachers, worshippers and dwellers of monasteries : O you who lay a claim to piety, you went astray into all the valleys and believed in all the admixtures of Truth and falsehood. You called the people to fabrications and false idols and narrowed down the sphere of life on them. You, in fact, had been appointed to facilitate life for them and not to restrict it. You depend on the stories current about the self–absorbed lovers for guidance and instruction ; whereas these things are not fit to be circulated, they should rather be buried deep and disposed of for ever.

"I ask the rulers: Don't you have any fear of God? You are absorbed in pursuit of transient pleasures and have completely forgotten your subjects to that they eat up each other. Drinking has become a common thing but you do not stop it ; adultery and gambling are rampant but you do not eradicate them. No punishment according to the Shariah has been awarded and executed since long in this vast Empire. You eat up the weak but spare and let go the powerful. Pleasure of the dish, coquetry and flirtations of women, fine clothes and artistic dwelling places, these have absorbed your attention, and you never think of God.

"I say to the fighting personnel : Allah made you soldiers so that you might fight in His way, propagate His *Kalimah* and break down the power of idolatry and idolaters. You abandoned your real object and took to horse–riding and armour–equipment. Now your hearts are devoid of any keenness for *Jihad* for you are soldiers of fortune. You indulge in wine and other kinds of intoxications ; you shave beards and grow moustaches ; you oppress the innocent people and never care whether you earn your living by fair means or foul ones. By God, you have to leave this world one day ; then Allah will tell you what you had been doing.

"I say to these artisans and common people : You have abandoned the sense of honest work, and given up the worship of your Lord. You are mixing up other gods with Him, offering sacrifices for others than Allah and go for pilgrimage to the graves of your chiefs and saints. That is the worst you could do. If one of you becomes prosperous he begins living beyond his means, thus depriving his near and dear ones : or he wastes his worldly means and ruins his Hereafter in drinking and debauchery.

"Then I address all classes of the Muslims : O children of Adam, you have wrecked your morals, made your living miserable and drifted into the care of Satan. Women have dominated over men, and men have made the lives of women wretched. You take pleasure in unlawful things and lawful things have become distasteful to you.

"O children of Adam : You have adopted such vicious customs and have corrupted true Faith. For instance, you gather together on the tenth of Muharram (the day of martyrdom of Imam Husain) and behave in an unbecoming way. One sect has made it the day of mourning. Don't you know that all days belong to Allah and all events take place according to His will? If Hazrat Husain (may God be pleased with him) was martyred on this day , what day is there on which some beloved servant of God may not have tasted death ? Some others have made it the day of rejoicing and recreation. Then on *Shab–i– Barat* you

behave and indulge in frivolous acts like the ignorant communities. A section of the people among you thinks that on this day plenty of food should be sent to the dead. Do you have any authority for such ideas and acts ? Then you have adopted such customs as have made your lives difficult for you, for instance, expending beyond means on marriage ceremonies, holding ceremonies, holding divorce as prohibited, keeping widows back from re-marriage, and such other things in which you have imposed undue restriction on yourselves in clear contravention of the right Guidance. The right course would have been that you adopted the customs which facilitated your lives instead of restraining them. Then you have turned the events of death and mourning into occasions for eating and rejoicing, as if it has been made obligatory on you that you must feed you relatives and near ones, and feed them well, on such occasions. You have become neglectful of prayers : some of you do not find time for prayers because they are engrossed in their business : others forget offering prayers because they were having good time with their friends. You have become unmindful of *Zakat* also: there is no rich man among you who is not feeding a number of others with him, but he does not do so with the intention of paying *Zakat*. You are not observing the fasting month and try to avoid its observance by various pretences. You have become highly sluggish and resourceless : you wholly depend on your ruler's service and stipends for your living, but when they find that their revenue resources are not rich enough to sustain you they begin taxing their poor subjects."

At another place in *Tafheemat* he writes : "Those people who visit Ajmer or the grave of Salar Mass-ud for the purpose of praying for the fulfilment of their desires commit a sin more heinous in nature than murder and adultery. What difference, one may ask, does remain between such an act and worshipping self-made idols ? The people who prayed before *Al-Lat* and *Al-Uzza*[19] did nothing different from these people. We, however take care not to pronounce these people infidels because

19. Al-Lat and Al-Uzza were the pre-Islamic pagan idols of Arabia.—Tr.

we do not possess any authority from the Legislator to do so in a case such as theirs. But as a matter of principle, any person who prays a dead one for the fulfilment of his desries, thinking that he is alive, corrupts his heart with sin."

These extracts have become unduly lengthy, but a few more sentences of *Tafheemat* Vol. II demand that they should also be conveyed to the readers. The Shah Sahib writes :"A Tradition of the Holy Prophet says, "you also will adopt the ways of the former communities and will exactly follow them in their foot–steps. If they went into the whole of a desert lizard, you will try to follow them there also." The Companions asked whether by 'the former communities' he meant the Jews and the Christians, on which the Prophet replied, 'Who else ?' This Tradition has been related by Imam Bukhari and Muslim.

"The Apostle of Allah (may Allah's peace be upon him) has very rightly said these words. We have seen such infirm Muslims who have taken their righteous people for gods other than Allah and who have turned the graves of their saints into places of worship after the manner of the Jews and the Chrirstians. We have also seen people who tamper with the Traditions of the Prophet and attribute this wrong saying to him : 'The pious are for Allah and the sinners for me.' This is similar to the claim of the Jews who say that they will not go to Hell except for a few days. The truth is that each sect today is freely tampering with Religion. Among the Sufis are current some sayings which do not accord with the Book and the *Sunnah*, especially those in connection with the Unity of God. It appears as if they have no regards for the *Shariah*. The jurists are formulating things for which there exists no basis or authority in the sources of law. For instance, the problem of 10×10^{20} and of the purity of wells[21] are engaging their whole attention. Besides them the rationalist and the poets and the

20. That is, a tank cannot have pure water unless it measures 10' x 10'.
21. That is, how many bucketfuls of water should be drawn from a well in order to purify its water after different categories of animals have fallen into it.

well–to–do and the common people, all are busy interpreting Religion after their own whims."

These excerpts can help one form a general view of how thoroughly Shah Waliullah has examined the past and the present of the Muslims and how searchingly he has criticised their notions and institutions.

The inevitable repercussion of such criticism has always been that the pious and the pure elements of the society who cherish true faith and can distinguish between good and evil are greatly upset and aroused by the feeling of adverse and unwholesome conditions prevailing around them. Thus, their Islamic sense becomes so sharpened that they begin feeling the tinge of each barbaric evil in their society ; their power of discrimination becomes so developed that they begin analysing each admixture of Islam and un–Islam ; and their faith is so much reinforced and strengthened that they become restive for reforms. The *Mujaddid* at this juncture comes to their aid and lays down before them the whole scheme for reconstruction, so that they may direct their effort and struggle with a view to achieving the desired ends speedily. This work of reconstruction also was equally well planned and accomplished by Shah Waliullah as he did the work of criticism and research.

WORK OF RECONSTRUCTION

The first important piece of work accomplished by Shah Waliullah in this connection is that he has presented a balanced and moderate view of Fiqh clear of all extremes and without showing inclination towards or disfavour for any School. He has studied the principles and methods of deducing inferences worked out and adopted by each juristic School of thought and formed an independent view of their value and usefulness. If he has favoured a particular School in a certain case, he has done so on account of some argument, and not because he wanted to plead for it. And if he has differed with the other he has done so because reason went against it and not on account of some ill–will or prejdice. It is for this reason that now he appears to be a Hanafite, now a Sahfi–ite or a Malikite or Hanbalite. He has criticised and differed sharply

with those people who pledge themselves to follow one particular School only in all matters of life, and those also who think they must always oppose a particular founder of a School as if it were a virtue. The Shah Sahib, thus, has carved out a via media for himself which can surely satisfy every unbiased seeker after truth. This has been fully expounded in his booklet, *Insaf*. Similar views have been expressed in his *Musaffa* and other books. In *Tafheemat* he writes:

"I have been inspired with the conviction that the Schools founded by Imam Abu Hanifah and Imam Shafi–ee are the most well–known among the *Ummah* and most people are the followers of these two. They claim most of the works also that have been compiled from time to time. Most jurists, scholars of Hadith, commentators, scholastics and Sufis have been the followers of Imam Shafi–ee ; whereas governments and the masses of the people have been the adherents of Imam Abu Hanifah. At this time the truth which seems to conform to the spirit of the heavenly Knowledge is that both these should be combined into one School. For this purpose, their interpretations should be reviewed and sifted against the Traditions of the Holy Prophet, and, whatever be found in complete conformity with them should be retained and whatever appears to be without a basis or authority should be discarded. Then whatever remains intact after review and criticism and is common to both the Schools should be held with the teeth. If, however, certain interpretations differ between the two, both the views should be held admissible for action. This difference of interpretation may be likened to the difference in the Quranic readings, or to the difference between concession (*rukhsat*) and steadfastness (*azeemat*) in pursuing a path of action. Or the two views may be regarded as the alternate ways out of a difficulty in the nature of alternate atonements[22] or as the adoption of one out of two equally permissible courses. God willing, no case will be found outside these four possibilities".

22. For instance, if somebody breaks his fast wilfully he may atone for it by observing 60 fasts, or by feeding 60 needy ones. Both the ways are equally permissible.

He has expounded this viewpoint with greater detail in *Insaf*; especially Chapter II of this book deserves a careful study both by the *Ahl–i–Hadith* (adherents of *Hadith*) and the *Ahl–i–Takhrij* (followers of the Schools). The approach preferred and commended by the Shah Sahib after an enlightening discussion of the subject is that the methods of both the groups should be combined to produce healthy and harmonious results. Similarly the discussion in Chapter VII of *Hujjah* also deserves a careful study.

The great advantage of adopting such a moderate approach is that, on the one hand, it puts an end to all kinds of prejudice, narrow–mindedness, rigid conformity and fruitless discussions and wrangles ; and, on the other, it opens new ways for research and *Ijtihad* with a broad outlook. Along with that the Shah Sahib has emphasised the necessity of undertaking *Ijtihad* in almost all his writings. In the preface of *Musaffa* he clearly writes:

"*Ijtihad* in every age is obligatory (on the Muslim scholars) and by *Ijtihad* I mean the full understanding of the *Shariah* values (*Ahkam*) based on the fundamentals of Islam, the elucidation of their details and the compilation and codification of new laws, although it may be in coformity with the approach adopted by the founder of a particular School. The reason why I have spoken of *Ijtihad* as obligatory is that every age has its own countless peculiar problems, and cognizance of the Divine injuction with reagrd to them is essential. The material which has already been written and compiled, is not only insufficient but also embodies many differences of opinion. These differences cannot be resolved without resort to the fundamentals of the *Shariah*, as aslo because the chain of authenticity leading back to the *mujtahids* is probably disrupted. Therefore the only way open is to review and reassess these differences against the principles of *Ijtihad*".

Shah Waliullah has not merely stressed the importance of *Ijtihad* but has also laid down its bases and principles and the conditions necessary for undertaking it. In *Izalah, Hujjah, Aqd–ul–Jid, Insaf, Badoor–i– Bazighah, Musaffa*, etc., ther are

allusions to as well as lengthy discourses on this subject. Whatever he has discussed anywhere in his writings has been discussed in the manner of a true, erudite scholar and *Mujtahid*. Therefore, the study and perusal of his books not only acquaints one with the principles of *Ijtihad* but also equips one with the necessary education of those principles.

These two aspects of the work are such as had been accomplished before the Shah Sahib also. But the aspect in which he has a claim to originality is that he has tried to present in a codified form the complete intellectual, moral, religious and cultural system of Islam. This achievement alone places him above all his predecessors. Though the work of great many religious doctors who were born during the first three or four centuries of the advent of Islam clearly shows that they possessed a comprehensive view of the complete system of Islam, and the works of the later scholars are in no way devoid of this impression, the comprehensive and logical approach made by Shah Waliullah in presenting Islam as a great system of life is unique and unparallelled in the whole history of Islam. His two books, *Hujjatullah–el–Balighah* and *Badoor–i–Bazighah*, deal with the same subject; the first being a detailed exposition of the subject and the second a philosophic view of it.

In these books he starts with metaphysical problem, and we meet the first scholar in our history laying down the foundations of the philosophy of Islam. Before him all that had been written in the name of philosophy by the Muslims has been wrongly and ignorantly called "the philosophy of Islam." It was, in fact, the philosophy of the Muslims which had been derived and imported from Greece and Rome, Iran and India. The real Islamic philosophy was actually started and propounded by this great Shaikh of Delhi, though he wrote it in the language and terminology of the same classical philosophy, scholasticism and philosophic mysticism, and has unconsciously incorporated many of their ideas also, as is natural for any who breaks new ground. But in spite of that it cannot be gainsaid that his has been a major effort to open new vistas of research, especially in an age of decline and disintegration of the worst type. The

birth of a man with such intellectual and rational powers in such an age is all the more amazing.

The cardinal point of the Shah Sahib's philosophy is that he has tried to present such a picture of the universe and of man in it that it fully conforms to and accords with the genius of the Islamic system of morality and culture. In other words, the Shah Sahib's system may be likened to the root of a 'genealogical' tree of Islam whose stem and branches are, as it were, in complete logical harmony with it and in natural relation to each other.[23] I am simply bewildered when I hear some people saying that "Shah Waliullah tried to provide a philosophic basis for the emergence of a new Indian nationalism by conjoining Vedantaism with Islamic thought." I have, however, been at a loss to find any trace of such an attempt in his books. Had I found any such trace I would, by God, have dethroned the Shah Sahib from the ranks of the *Mujaddids* of Islam and placed him among the innovators.

The Shah Sahib has raised the structure of a Social Philosophy on the bases of a moral system under the heading of *Irtafaqat.*[24] In this connection he has fully discussed subjects like the organization of family life, social etiquette, politics, judiciary, taxation, civil administration and military organization etc., and has also spotlighted those causes which help in the disintegration of a civilization.

Then he presents the system of the *Shariah* including the various kinds of worship, injunctions and regulations and outlines the wisdom behind each. This kind of work had been accomplished by Imam Ghazali also but Shah Waliullah has clearly far surpassed him.

In the end, he has reviewed the history of other communities and their religious codes and, as far as I know, he is the first

23. The philosophy current among the Muslims had no relation to the Islamic beliefs, practices and morality. Therefore, as it spread it went on disrupting the practical life of the people: it spoiled their beliefs, ruined their morals and benumbed their energies for action. This was the natural consequence of conflicting ideas. The same condition is now emerging on account of the diffusion of the modern Western Philosophy, which cannot become the basis of the Islamic System.

24. That is, daily affairs of the people.—Tr.

scholar who ever gave a bird's–eye of the historical conflict between Islam and un–Islam.

THE RESULTS

When such a rational and logically worked out plan of the Islamic system was presented it was quite inevitable that all the right–thinking and good–natured elements of the society made it their ideal of life, and those among them who possessed greater practical powers pledged their lives to attain it. Whether the person propounding such an ideal practically endeavours to lead such a movement or not, the impetus that provided real force to the movement was the clear–cut distinction which the Shah Sahib had drawn between the Islamic and the un–Islamic rule. He had not only explained and recounted the characteristics of the Islamic rule but had recounted them repeatedly in so diverse ways that the faithful and true Muslims became restive and could not help struggling with a view to replacing the un–Islamic rule by the Islamic one. This subject has been fully discussed in *Hujjah* but *Izalah* has been almost wholly devoted to it. In this book the author has illustrated from the Traditions that Islamic Caliphate and kingship are inherently different things. Then, on the one hand, he has described kingship with all the iniquities brought in and caused by it in the social life of the Muslims throughout history; and, on the other, has elucidated the merits and conditions of Islamic Caliphate and detailed the blessings which it bestowed on the *Ummah*. After such an exposition of Islam how could people possibly rest content with the abuses and evil trends of the time?

SAYYID AHMAD BRELAVI AND SHAH ISMAIL SHAHID[25]

Hardly half a century had passed after the death of Shah Waliullah when a movement emerged on the scene of Indo–Pak subcontinent whith the same ideals and objectives as had been cherished and set forth by him. Whether one views the *Mak-*

25. Sayyid Ahmad was born in 1201 A.H. (1786 A.D.) and martyred in 1246 A.H. (1831 A.D.). The idea to start a revolutionary movement seized Sayyid Ahmad's mind probably in or about 1810 A.D.

tubat (epistles) and *Mulfuzat* (sayings) of Sayyid Ahmad or goes through *Mansab–i–Imamat, Abadat, Taqwiyyat–ul–Iman* and other writings of Shah Ismail Shahid, one finds the same spirit and style of Shah Waliullah running through every page. The practical side of Shah Sahib's work was that by disseminating the knowledge of the Quran and *Hadith* and by force of his highly effective personality, he produced a large number of right–thinking, pious people. Then his four sons, especially Shah Abdul Aziz, greatly enlarged this circle with the result that within a short space of time thousands of such people spread all over India as had drunk deep at the fountain of the Shah Sahib's ideas. These people carried in them the true picture of Islam, and by virtue of their vast knowledge and solid character became the most effective means of propagating among the common people the ideas and influence of the Shah Sahib and his circle. Thus was prepared the ground for the movement which was destined to spring up from within the same circle, or rather from the Shah Sahib's own house.

Sayyid Ahmad and Shah Ismail may be considered as one and the same in spirit and action. I, however, do not regard their combined body as an independent *Mujaddid* by itself; I hold it complementary to the revivalist work of Shah Waliullah. The achievements of these two revered men may be summed up as follows:

1. They raised a strong movement for the reformation of the religious, moral and social affairs of the common people. Wherever their good influence reached, lives were so completely revolutionised that they reminded once again of the lives of the Holy Prophet's Companions.

2. They made large–scale preparations for *Jihad* at a difficult time (beginning of the 19th century) when India was fast heading towards total collapse and disintegration; and they displayed marvellous organizational skill and ability in this work. That they selected the north–western India (now Pakistan) for the launching of their campaign clearly shows their knowledge of war strategy in those days. Politically as well as geographically there could be no better starting point. Then, they tried to

observe throughout *Jihad* all the moral principles and war tactics which are the hallmark of a *Mujahid* and distinguish him from a world-seeking fighter. Thus they demonstrated once again the real Islamic spirit before the world. They did not fight for the sake of wealth or territory, national pride or any other worldly greed; they fought in the Way of Allah. The only objective before them was to deliver the masses of the people from the yoke of un-Godly rule, and establish that system of government which accords with the will of the Creator and real Sovereign. With this object in view they first invited the people., according to rule, to accept Islam or to pay *Jizyah*, and then took up arms as a last resort. And when they took up arms they scrupulously observed the civilized law of war taught by Islam; they did not commit any wild or savage act; and they did not enter a township to destroy and shed blood but to reform and make peace. Their army was neither accompanied by barrels of wine, nor attended by musical band and prostitutes to turn their camps into brothels. Not even a single instance has been reported that the *Mujahidin* passed through a locality and the inhabitants complained about the molestation of their women and the plunder of their properties. On the contrary, these soldiers of Allah spent their daytime on horse-back and nights in prayers: they feared Allah and remembered the Day of Judgment always; and they were firm on the way of truth and justice in all circumstances, favourable or unfavourable. If they suffered a defeat they did not lose heart and show cowardice; if they came out triumphant they did not feel proud and behave like tyrants. History bears evidence that the soil of the subcontinent had neither witnessed the real Islamic *Jihad* before them nor has ever seen such a phenomenon after them.

3. When they got a chance to establish their rule in a limited territory they established it on the basis of "Caliphate after the pattern of Prophethood." It was characteristic of the same pious and God-fearing control, the same kind of equality and advisory body, and the same execution of justice and enforcement of *Shariah* punishments. Property was lawfully seized and justly disposed of, the oppressed were protected though they be weak,

and the oppressors were crushed though they be strong. The rulers feared God and executed the Governmental business with perfect morality. Thus they demonstrated and revived once again the type of rule established and guided by Abu Bakr Siddiq and Umar Faruq (may Allah be pleased with them).

These pious people, however, failed to attain their larger objective[26] on account of some inherent causes which will be mentioned later. But the movement of ideas initiated by them can still be seen at work in the Indo–Pak subcontinent even after a hundred years or so of the failure of their mission.

CAUSES OF FAILURE

Any discussion of the causes of failure of this last revivalist movement is generally not received well by those people who are wont to talk about their heroes with deep reverence and respect. I am, therefore, afraid that what I am going to say under the present heading may hurt the feelings of some of my brethren. If the object of all our talk and discussion about our great heroes is not merely to sing their praises, but we are keen to learn lessons from their triumphs and failures for future guidance, then we cannot help casting a critical eye on their work with a view to un–veiling their achievements and spotlighting the causes responsible for their failure. The great circle of the righteous and truth–loving *Ulema* trained and produced by Shah Waliullah and his some and the enormous army of pious and God–fearing soldiers raised by Sayyid Ahmad and Shah Shahid have been a rare phenomenon in our recent history. When we read about them we feel as if we are reading the life–stories of the Holy Prophet's Companions and their followers living in the earliest period of Islam. The more surprising fact is that such people were living in an age so near ours,

26. Their failure is apparent, not real. The real success for a Muslim is that he works for the establishment of Islam in order to win the favour of Allah, and works as he rightly should. Judged by this criterion; the *Mujahidin* succeeded in their mission. But from the worldly point of view they failed because they could not put an end to the un–Godly rule and practically establish the political supremacy of Islam. We shall try to examine the causes of their failure here so that these may be taken notice of and avoided in any future attempt to establish an Islamic State.

and yet the question arises: Why did a reformist and revolutionary movement of indigenous origin led and guided by so pious and God-fearing *Mujahidin* not succeed in establishing an Islamic State in India in spite of the humanly possible effort that they put in ? While, on the contrary, the English who came from thousands of miles were able to form a secular Government on the soil of this sub-continent. If this question is not boldly faced and is left unanswered, people may get the impression that all well-meaning and pious efforts including *Jihad* are useless, or at least ineffective, to reform the affairs of this world. They may further be disappointed to think that when a sacred *Jihad* movement with so great potentialities could not succeed, any new efforts on their part to reform the world is bound to meet with failure. I have in fact heard such apprehensions being expressed by people. Recently when I happened to visit Aligarh the same misgiving was publicly expressed before me in the Strachey Hall and I had to make a brief speech to dispel it. I am also aware of the fact that the pious *Ulema* who are present among the *Ummat* these days are generally indifferent to this matter. I am sure that if this question is properly studied and carefully analysed we can learn lessons highly beneficial in the way of guiding any future struggle for a similar cause.

THE FIRST CAUSE

The one weakness which in my opinion has always attended the work of our reformers ever since the time of *Mujaddid* Alf-i-Thani till Shah Waliullah and his successors may be ascribed to their failure to form a correct view of the Muslim peoples' morbid attachment for *Tasawwuf*. This was a malady which might well have been cured by taking necessary precautions. But not only were the precautions not taken, the disease was aggravated by giving an overdose of the undesirable diet. True to God, I bear no personal grudge against the *Tasawwuf* presented by these reformers ; in spirit it was indeed the real *Tasawwuf* of Islam, nothing different from *Ihsan*. But what I think should be carefully eschewed are the mystic allusions and metaphoric references, the mystic language, and the con-

tinuance of a peculiar mystic lore, customs and traditions. Obviously, the real Islamic *Tasawwuf* does not stand in need of this particular mould. Some other form and some other language may be adopted for its expression, mystic allusions and references may be avoided, and the saint–disciple traditional relationship in all its allied forms may be replaced. After all what is the necessity of sticking and adhering to a form which has been corrupted by un–Godly practices for long times ? The large–scale diffusion of these mystic abuses among the common people has in fact produced the worst religious and moral degeneration too well known to the right–minded people. Things have now come to a pretty pass. A person may present the real teachings of Islam, but as soon as he adopts the traditional mystic lore and customs all the weaknesses and abuses associated with it through usage for centuries also return.

Just as a pure and lawful thing like water is prohibited when it is deemed to be harmful to a patient, similarly the cult of *Tasawwuf,* though allowable, needs to be eschewed and laid aside. For, through it the Muslims have become addicted to a kind of intoxication which has lulled them to sleep and sapped them of life and reality for centuries. As soon as *bai'at* is performed, the disciples start developing a servile mentality which has become intimately associated with the system of disciple–ship:

"Colour the prayer–carpet with wine if so orders you the spiritual guide." Obviously, such a mentality does not leave any difference btween the spiritual guide and the gods other than Allah. It results in the incapacity of all mental powers of discrimination and criticism, of thinking and reasoning, and the disciple is completely obsessed with the guide's personality and authority as if he were his Lord. Then the reference to 'divine inspirations' further strengthens the shackles of mental servility and the mention of mystic allusions and metaphoric references so deepens and enhances the imaginative and superstitious faculty of the ignorant followers that, being detached from the world of reality, they become wholly absorbed in the world of wonders and mystery.

Both the Mujaddid Sahib and Shah Waliullah were fully aware of this chronic ailment of the Muslims and both have taken due notice of its abuses in their writings. But most probably they could not diagnose correctly the extent and intensity of this disease, and therefore, unwittingly prescribed the same harmful diet for the patients as had proved fatal before. Consequently the disease spread freely and affected adversely the very vitals of their followers.[27]

Though Maulana Ismail Shahid fully estimated the extent of the abuse and followed strictly the same practical approach as had been adopted by Imam Ibn–i–Taimiyyah, the writings of Shah Waliullah, nevertheless, contained reference to his mystic experiences and this affected his own writings as well. Then, on the practical side, the tradition of saint–disciple relationship had been associated with the movement of Sayyid Ahmad from the very beginning. Therefore, this movement also could not remain immune from the fatal germs of the mystic abuse. So much so that after the martyrdom of Sayyid Ahmad a section of his followers began cherishing like the *Shiahs* the doctrine of "disappearance" and they still eagerly await his re–appearance.

Now, therefore, if somebody wishes and plans to revive Islam, he must shun the language and terminology of the Sufis, their mystic allusions and metaphoric references, their dress and etiquette, the saint–disciple institution and all other things associated with it. Indeed he must make the Muslims abstain from these abuses just as a diabetic is warned to abstain from sugar.

THE SECOND CAUSE

The second weakness which one discovers after a critical study of the movement is the fact that Sayyid Ahmad and Shah Shahid did not make suitable effort to prepare ground in the area where they undertook *Jihad* for the establishment of the revolutionary Islamic rule. Their army, no doubt, consisted of

27. Not long after the death of the Mujaddid Sahib, his followers began calling him and his successors by the title of '*Qayyum* the First' and '*Qayyum* the Second' respectively, *Qayyum* being an Attribute of Allah, Almighty.

morally and spiritually well-trained personnel, but these people had been mustered from all the four corners of India, and their position in the north-western part was of immigrants. The necessary pre-requisite for bringing about a political revolution in the area was to work for the moral and spiritual uplift of the common populace of the area itself. This would have enabled the local people to understand and appreciate the Islamic system of Government and become its helpers. Both the leaders probably harboured the misunderstanding that since the people of the Frontier region were Muslims and had been fed up with the non-Muslim domination they would eagerly welcome the Islamic rule. Therefore, as soon as they entered the area, they started *Jihad,* and immediately proclaimed the Islamic Caliphate in the small territory they captured. But eventually it was revealed by experience that regarding the so-called Muslims to be the true Muslims and expecting from them things which can only be expected from the true Muslims was a blunder. Those people in fact were not capable of sustaining Caliphate. Therefore when it was established they sank under its weight and with them crumbled the whole pious edifice.

This is another lesson of history which must be kept foremost in mind for the success of any future effort at Revival. It must be borne in mind that unless a political revolution gains root in the social, moral and cultural life of a people it can never meet with success. Even if it succeeds it cannot stay for long, and when it collapses it does not leave even a trace behind it.[28]

THE THIRD CAUSE

Now the question arises: What was the real cause of the English people's superiority which enabled them to create an un-Godly State thousands of miles away from their home, whereas the *Mujahidin* failed to establish an Islamic State in their homeland ? This question cannot be rightly answered unless one considers it against the background of the

28. For the same reason, no trace of the two martyrs or of their work is to be found today in the Frontier region. Even their names have been forgotten which people are now coming to know from Urdu books.

eighteenth and nineteenth century's Europe. If the work of Shah Waliullah and his successors for the Revival of Islam is put on one side of a balance and on the other side is put the total strength with which the contemporary evil forces were working their influence, one can form some idea of the ratio of strength between the counteracting forces. Being as precise as possible, one can say that it was the ratio of a tola to a maund. Therefore, whatever happened was just natural and quite in keeping with the principles of this material world.

The age in which Shah Waliullah, Shah Abdul Aziz and Shah Ismail Shahid were born in India was the time when Europe was rising with a new vigour from the stupor of the Middle Ages. Countless of her scientists, discoverers and inventors were working hard to create a new world in place of the old. This was the age which produced philosophers of the calibre of Hume, Kant, Nitsche, Hegle, Comte, Schlier Macher and Mill who revolutionised logic and metaphysics, ethics and psychology and all other rational sciences. Again this was the age which produced geniuses like Galvani and Volta in Physics, La Voisier, Priestley, Davy and Berzilius in Chemistry, and Linne, Haller Bichat and Wolff in Biology. The researches of these scientists not only greatly enriched the physical sciences, but they also gave rise to a new theory about the Universe and man. Then the deep studies carried out by Quisney, Turgot, Adam Smith and Malthus in the same age gave birth to the new science of Economics. The birth of Rousseau, Voltaire, Montaigne, Denis Diderot, La Mattrie, Cabanis, Buffon, Robinet in France; Thomas Paine, William Godwin, David Hartley, Joseph Priestley, Erasmus, Darwin in England; and of Goethe, Herder, Schiller, Winekelmann, Lassing, Holbach in Germany had far–reaching effects on moral philosophy, literature, law, religion, politics and the other social sciences. They fearlessly assailed and criticised the classical world and its conventions and built entirely a new world of fresh ideas and thoughts.

Then the use of press and printing process, new styles of expression and preference for simple language to the verbose

technical style of the ancients greatly helped in the spread and circulation of the ideas and theories of these people. Their influence was not limited to particular individuals, it spread to whole nations and communities. Thus they revolutionised the whole intellectual world: they changed the peoples' moral view point, their system of education, philosophy and ideals of life and their whole outlook in matters political and cultural.

The French Revolution brought in its wake a new civilization, and the invention of machine and the consequent Industrial Revolution gave birth to a new vigorous culture with new problems of life. Engineering got an extraordinary impetus and enabled Europe to capture and conquer forces un–known to the world before. A new art of warfare was developed, replacing the old, with new weapons and new strategic skills. Armies were organised and trained by regular drill with the result that they moved like machines in the battlefield and encountering them became difficult for the old–fashioned 'lashkars'. The development and division of forces and the strategic skills and devices were continuously improved with every new experience in the battle field. New weapons of war including the rifle, light and fast–moving cannons and heavy machinery for selling forts with far greater effect were invented, and the invention of cartridge rendered the old– fashioned powder–guns utterly useless. It was mainly due to this advancement that the Turks in Europe and the native States of India had to suffer continued defeats at the hands of modern armies, and Napoleon took Egypt with a handful of troops after attacking the very heart of the world of Islam.

A cursory glance over the events of contemporary history reveals that whereas in the subcontinent, a few individuals only had cast off slumber entire nations had risen in the West; and whereas a little work was done only in one direction here, a thousand times greater progress was made there in almost all directions. No aspect of life remained in which quick headway was not made. Here, only Shah Waliullah and his sons wrote a few books on certain subjects which could only reach and influence a very limited circle; in the West whole libraries were

produced on almost all arts and sciences which dominated and possessed the whole intellectual world in no time. Here, the study of philosophy, ethics, sociology, politics and economics in the modern way remained in the elementary stage without further progress; in the West entire systems of thought in these subjects were propounded which had lasting impact on all ways and aspects of life. Here the knowledge of physical sciences and material forces had remained static for five hundred years or so; in the West these branches of knowledge made tremendous progress and gave such powers in the hands of the people that encountering them with the out-moded weapons and devices became well nigh impossible.

The more surprising fact is that the English had seized Bengal in the time of Shah Waliullah and their influence had reached as far as Allahabad, but he did not seem to take due notice of this fast emerging power. In the days of Shah Abdul Aziz, the King of Delhi had become a pensioner under the British suzerainty and the latter had brought almost whole of India under their sway. But even he did not seem to bother himself about the supremacy of this nation and the reasons for this supremacy. Even Sayyid Ahmad and Shah Ismail who had risen with the sole objective of bringing about an Islamic revolution and practically made all possible preparations and arrangements for its success, did not think of sending out a deputation of worthy *Ulema* to Europe with a view to investigating and inquiring into the causes of the material superiority of her people. They could thus have studied the means and methods of the Western people, their arts and sciences, the types of their institutions, the bases of their civilization and the secret of the unlimited powers in their control. Had they done so it would have enabled them to detect their own weaknesses and adopt means to remove them. When the *Mujahidin* rose to organise and undertake *Jihad,* it was no secret that the real formidable power in India and the one to be seriously reckoned with by them was of the English, not of the Sikhs. One is at a loss to understand how they could possibly lose sight of this important aspect of the matter. They, in fact, never made an

effort to compare and weigh their strength and resources against those of their real enemy and rectify their weakness in a bid to decide finally the encounter between Islam and un–Islam. However, when they committed this mistake they could not escape its consequences in this world of causal relations.

THE END

The first lesson that we learn from the failure of this Islamic movement in its conflict with the Western Godlessness is that though the revival of religious sciences and the practice of the *Shariah* in its true spirit are essential for the renaissance of Islam, yet something more is required. It, indeed, demands the full support and backing of a comprehensive universal ideological movement which may bring a strong influence to bear upon all sciences and trends of thought, all arts and practical skills, in short, all walks and spheres of life, and muster all possible strength and means to the service of Islam.

Second, the work of Revival and reconstruction in the modern times demands a new power for *Ijtihad.* The insight and power of interpretation displayed by Shah Waliullah and the earlier *mujtahids* and *mujaddids* cannot cope with the present day situations. The new age accompanied by new means and powers has brought with it new evils and produced countless new problems of life, which could not even have crossed the mind of the Shah Sahib and the early doctors. These conditions were only known to Allah who imparted these to His Messenger with His grace. Therefore, the only source of guidance and inspiration for an ideological movement for the renaissance of Islam in this age are the Book of Allah and the *Sunnah* of His Prophet. Then in the light of this guidance such an independent power of *Ijihad* is needed as may carve out a highway for action. It may benefit from the experiences of one and all of the former *mujtahids* but at the same time it may not bind itself to the cult and thought–pattern of any.

APPENDICES

These appendices are meant to provide the reader with appropriate replies to the various objections and misgivings that have been raised or created from time to time by people with regard to my views expressed in this book. Here are the questions which have been sent to me by different people at different times, along with their replies. It is hoped that these will satisfy other people also who might have some such objections or misgivings in their minds.

I. THE NATURE OF TAJDID AND IMAM MEHDI

Question :

That the "Revivalist Movement in Islam" is a great work indeed can best be judged and seen by a keen reader after going through the Chapter on the "Nature of Islamic Revival" and the account of the achievements of the great *mujaddids* of Islam. Some points, however, need further explanation and they are as follows :

(a) The three weak points that you have mentioned at the end of the section on Imam Ghazali are:

(i) His weakness in the science of *Hadith,*

(ii) the predominance of the rationalist science on his mind, and

(iii) his undue inclination towards *tasawwuf.*

Can these things be proved from the famous books of the *Imam* like *Ihya–ul–Uloom* and *Keemiya–i–Saadat ?* And is not the *tasawwuf* which he has elaborated and commended in these books praise–worthy ? Then is not a *mujaddid* given more of real knowledge as against his contemporaries ? If it is not so, how can he claim and enjoy special distinction in the world around him?

(b) About Mujaddid Alf–i–Thani and Shah Waliullah you have written : "The one weakness which in my opinion has always attended the work of our reformers ever since the time of Mujaddid Alf–i–Thani till Shah Waliullah and his successors may be ascribed to their failure to form a correct view of the Muslim people's morbid attachment for *tasawwuf.* This was a malady which might well have been cured by taking necessary precautions. But now only were the precautions not taken, the disease was aggravated by giving an over–dose of the undersirable diet." In this connection it is difficult to believe that the Mujaddid and the Shah Sahib were so dull–witted as to be unable to estimate fully the extent of the malady of *tasawwuf.* It is well known that these revered people had not only mastered worldly sciences but had acquired keen insight into

spiritual sciences as well by way of 'Divine Inspiration.' Then they have laid claim to their being *mujaddids* also and this fact has been duly mentioned by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad in his *Tazkirah*. The Mujaddid himself has written in his epistles that the *mujaddid* who has appeared after a thousand years of the Holy Prophet's mission is he. In view of these facts, the following questions naturally arise in one's mind :

(i) Was not the claim put forth by these two revered men of being *mujaddids* according to the Divine Will ? What is the reality of the 'Divine inspirations' so often mentioned by them in their books? Did they become *mujaddids* by appointment or just by the way ?

(ii) Is this common belief correct that a *mujaddid* is necessarily the most learned man of his age as far the sciences of the *Shariah* and the secrets of Religion are concerned and that he is the nearest to Allah ? If it is not so, why is he preferred to others in his appointment to this important position ?

(iii) What is the secret and reality of *mubasharat* (glad tidings) ?

(iv) Is not the Tradition that at the head of each century will appear a *mujaddid,* an authentic one ? And should not such *a mujaddid* be aware of his appointment as such ?

(c) Your view about Al–Imam–ul–Mehdi is that he will be quite different from the description of him given by the common *Ulema*. On the contrary, the *Ulema* assert that even the name and the lineage of the *Imam* along with other indications have been mentioned in the Traditions. He will appear in certain known environment with specific signs and people will readily recognise him and performing *bai't* will make him their ruler. Thereupon a voice will be heard from the Heavens saying, "This is Al–Imam–ul–Mehdid, the vicegerent of Allah." But according to you : "None but a Prophet has any right to start his work with a claim, nor does anybody except a Prophet know with certainty the nature of his mission.

'Mehdiism' is not something to be claimed, it is rather something to be achieved. People who put forward such claims and those who readily accept them in fact betray a serious lack of knowledge and a depraved mentality."

My question is : Are not the assertions and claims related by so many of our learned *Ulema* (for instance, Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi in his *Bahishti Zevar*) based on authentic Traditions? If they are, how can you support your line of argument ?

Reply :

Instead of writing a direct reply to your question I would like to explain further some points which if properly understood will dispel most of your misgivings.

First, we do not possess any means by which we could say with certainty that a particular person was a *mujaddid* and another was not. This has always been done by people during the life–time or after the passing away of a person on the basis of the quality of work performed by him. It has most often given rise to difference of opinion also. Quite a few of our learned *Ulema*, for instance, believe that certain people of the past were *mujaddids*, whereas others do not regard them worthy of that title. As a matter of fact, there is no special sign attached to a person which may determine exactly his status or position for us.

Second, *Tajdid* is not a religious office to which a person may be appointed by Allah according to His will, and believing or disbelieving in him as such may affect one's religious belief favourably or adversely. It is merely a title which is given to a person on the basis of his achievements. If a person has rendered some services in the way of revitalising Islam, he may be called a *mujaddid*. If according to others his achievements are not good enough to earn him this title he may not be held entitled to it by them. Ignorant people have made this matter look unduly important. The Holy Prophet merely asserted that Allah will not let this Religion wholly die out, but will raise at the head of each century a person or persons

who will revive it and bring it back to tis original pure form. The Arabic word *mun* in the Tradition does not necessarily imply only one person; it may imply several persons. Then there is no word in the Tradition which may be taken to suggest that a *mujaddid* has to be aware of his being a *mujaddid*, or that people are bound to acknowledge him as such.

Third, a person's being a *mujaddid* does not mean that he is a perfect man and that his work is faultless. In order to declare someone a *mujaddid* it is enough to see that his life activity on the whole bears testimony to his service for the Revival of Islam. But it would be a grave mistake if after acknowledging a person as *mujaddid* we regard him as infallible also, and believe in whatever he says without question. For a *mujaddid* is not innocent and if infallible like a Prophet.

Fourth, my cirticism of the work of the *mujaddids* of the *Umma* is after all, based on my personal judgement and opinion. Every person, therefore, is free to differ from any of my opinions. If the arguments on which I have based my opinions satisfy one, well and good; if they do not, one may reject them. What I want is that an opinion be accepted or rejected by argument and reason and not under the fit of heroworship.

Fifth, some revered men of the past have no doubt claimed that as inspired by Allah they were the *mujaddids* of their ages, but they never demanded that the Muslims must accept and acknowledge them as such, and one who did not do so was a heretic. Making claims, inviting people to accept them and demanding of them to do so is none of the functions of a *mujaddid*. One who behaves like that actually proves that he is not a *mujaddid* at all.

Sixth, 'Divine Inspiration' does not always yield real and definite knowledge as Revelation does. Its nature is such that one who is absorbed in it does not know with certainty whether his 'inspiration' is from Allah or not. It is liable to be misinterpreted and misunderstood. The *Ulema*, therefore, are agreed that no *Shariah* injunction is proved and established by *Kashf* or divine inspiration. Nothing that is derived through it has religious sanction, nor is it lawful for its recipient to follow

it without questioning and judging its validity against the Book of Allah and *Sunnah* of His Prophet.

Seventh, whatever I have written about Imam Mehdi has been further explained on pages 118 to 124 of this book. You may kindly go through all these explanations which will acquaint you with my research on the Traditions on the basis of which the *Ulema* have compiled all their details. I have a high regard for all these *Ulema* but I have never been used to accept anything from anybody without question.

(Tarjuman–ul–Quran, January February 1951).

II. REVELATION AND MUJADDIDS

Question :

While answering a question in the *Tarjuman–ul–Quran* for January–February, 1951, you have written : "Some revered men of the past have no doubt claimed that as inspired by Allah they were the *mujaddids* of their ages, but they never demanded that the Muslims must accept and acknowledge them as such, and one who did not do so was a heretic."

This view of yours does not seem to be well founded. Shah Waliullah of Delhi, for instance, has claimed with great confidence that as inspired by Allah he was the Imam of his age and that people should follow him to attain salvation (see *Tafheemat–i–Ilahiyah,* Vol. II, P. 125). Don't you think that this claim of the Shah Sahib was valid ? If it was, then your following statement is automatically proved wrong:

"Making claims, inviting people to accept them and demanding of them to do so is none of the functions of a *mujaddid.*"

Your next statement is : "One who behaves like that actually proves that he is not a *mujaddid at all."*

I want to know whether these statements of yours are based on the Quran or the Traditions of the Prophet, or whether they are the result of your personal *Ijtihad.*

Under Para VI of your reply you have written:

"Divine inspiration does not yield real definite knowledge as Revelation does. Its nature is such that the subject does not know with certainty whether his 'inspiration' is from Allah or not."

Again : Is this statement based on your personal experience or *Ijtihad,* or has been derived from the Quran and the Traditions ?

One wonders that if the reality of the 'Divine Inspirations' of the 'perfect men' of the Holy Prophet's *Ummah* was just that, how could one believe them to be the best among the *Ummah*? On the contrary, even women in the former communities are known to have been blessed with definite *Wahi* (revelation). Besides, there have been men of God whose high–natured 'inspirations' even put a great Prophet to shame when he questioned it. What a wonder then that 'divine inspirations' of the people of the Holy Prophet's *Ummah* only were such that the recipients of these inspirations did not know with certainty whether they were from Allah or not. One naturally asks: why did it become necessary for Allah to bless them with such 'inspiration' if it was not meant to yield any religious knowledge or benefit its recipient spiritually, but on the contrary was to become a source of confusion because of its uncertainty ?

Reply :

Your first error is that you have mixed up the various aspects of the meaning of *Wahi* and *Ilham* (inspiration). One kind of *Wahi* may be called instinctive inspiration by which Allah teaches His creatures the functions of their being. This kind of *Wahi* comes down more often on animals than on human beings, and perhaps most often on plant life and solid matter. The second kind may be called 'the partial Wahi' by which Allah gives one of his creatures some knowledge or guidance or suggests him an idea pertaining to an every day affair. This kind of *Wahi* comes down almost daily on common human beings. All the great inventions in the world and all the great scientific discoveries have been brought about by it; and the same can be seen behind all the important historical

events. It has so often happened that an idea entered a person's mind suddenly without serious thought and changed the course of history in a decisive manner. Such a *Wahi*, for instance, was sent down on the mother of Prophet Moses.

Quite different from these two kinds is the *Wahi* by which Allah informs one of His Servants about the 'Unseen' facts and blesses him with Guidance for a system of life, so that he conveys this Knowledge and Guidance to mankind at large in order to bring them out of darkness into light. This kind of *Wahi* is sent down only to the Prophets. The Quran clearly says that this kind of Knowledge—call it *Ilqa*, *Kashf* or *Ilham* or term it *Wahi*—is given to none but the Prophets amd Messengers of Allah. Then this knowledge is so conveyed to the Prophets that they perfectly believe it to be from Allah, absolutely free from Satanic interference and untainted by their personal ideas, concepts and whims. This is the Knowledge that wields religious Authority, and is meant to be binding on all human beings. Prophets were appointed solely for the purpose of propagating this Knowledge among the people at large and inviting them to accept it for their guidance.

If some people other than the Prophets are blessed with this Knowledge they receive it only in the shape of vague hints which can be correctly understood and interpreted only in the light of Prophetic Revelation (i.e., the Quran and the *Sunnah*). Without having recourse to this Light if a person regards his 'inspiration' as an independent source of guidance, acts on it without determining its validity and invites other people to accept and follow it, he is like a forger who tries to establish an independent mint parallel to the official one. Such an act of his suffices to prove that he is not inspired by Allah at all.

Whatever I have written above has been clearly stated and borne out by the Quran at various places. Especially, the last verse of the Surah Jinn is very explicit on this point:

> "(He is) the Knower of the Unseen, and He reveals unto none His secret, save unto every messenger whom He has

chosen, and then He makes a guard to go before him and a guard behind him that He may know that they have indeed conveyed the messages of their Lord. He surrounds all their doings, and He keeps count of all things." (72/26)

If you consider this point a little more carefully, you will yourself understand the Divine widsom of importing only a secondary kind of *Wahi* to the righteous people of the *Ummah*, unlike the Prophets. The reason why they do not receive full-fledged Revelation like a Prophet is that receipt of revelation is the only distinctive feature between a Prophet and his followers and this distinction cannot be done away with. The reason why they need only a secondary kind of *Wahi* is that in order to make an effort to continue the mission of a Prophet after him they naturally stand in need of deep insight in the secrets of Religion and right guidance from Allah in order to establish Islam in its entirety. Almost every sincere and right-thinking preacher of Islam is endowed with these qualities unconsciously, but if some one happens to receive them in full consciousness, it should be looked upon as a special favour from Allah.

Your second basic error is that you have failed to appreciate the fundamental difference between the positions of a Prophet and a non-Prophet. According to the Quran only a Prophet is appointed Allah's Messenger directly, and is authorised by Him to invite mankind to believe and follow him. A person who does not believe in him is declared unbeliever though he may be having faith in God. This high status in enjoyed by none but a Prophet in the system of Religion. If someone else lays a claim to this position it lies on him to bring a proof for his claim. He should let us know where in the Quran and *Hadith* a non-Prophet has been authorised to put forward claims of appointment, invite people to accept these claims and declare all such people infidels and condemned to Hell as do not accept them.

In response to this if someone refers to the Tradition (*Main Yujaddidu Laha Deenaha*) or quotes the Traditions about the coming of the Mehdi, I would say that none of these

Traditions refers to the position of a *mujaddid* or the Mehdi entitling him to such a claim. Indeed it has nowhere been indicated that these people will lay claims to their being *mujaddids* and the Mehdi, and only such people will remain Muslim as will accept their claims; all others will become un-believers.

In this connection, it is beside the point to bring in the discussion that if one opposes or withholds support from a *mujaddid* who is working for the Revival and Establishment of Islam one will not attain salvation in the Hereafter. There is no doubt that whenever such a task is undertaken it sets bounds between the Truth and falsehood, and every truth-loving person naturally likes to put his weight on the side of the Truth. But this tendency to support the Truth actually springs from a Muslim's sense of obligation to exert for the Revival and Establishment of Islam and not because it is demanded by his faith to accept the claims of the claimants. Therefore, it would be absurd to think that one is deprived of salvation simply because one did not accept a person's claim of being a *mujaddid* or the Mehdi.

Now let us consider the claims put forth by Shah Waliullah and the Mujaddid of Sirhind. I am too well known for my conviction that I do not regard our great men of the past as innocent and infallible. While I give them full credit for their good work, I do not spare them for their failings. I am therefore afraid that if I say things frankly in the present case I shall be charged with another offence. But one should have more fear of Allah at heart than the fear of the world. Therefore, let people say what they like but I cannot help saying that asserting themselves to be the *mujaddids* and referring time and again to their 'Divine inspirations' was one of the few mistakes committed by these great men. Indeed it was such mistakes of theirs that encouraged and prompted so many lesser men after them to put forward tall claims and create new schisms in the Ummah. If a person finds himself fit and capable to work for the Revival of Islam he should whole-heartedly work for it and leave it to God to judge and determine his position. For the real position of a person is that which Allah will grant him

through His grace in the hereafter on the basis of his intentions and deeds, and not that which he claims or which people give him here. I do not think it is in any way praise–worthy to propose title for oneself, assert them publicly and talk loudly of one's positions to impress people. The latter–day representatives of Sufism made this tendency so alluring that even some really pious people did not hesitate to adopt it. But one fails to find even a trace of such a tendency in the time of the Companions of the Holy Prophet, the Companions of the Companions and their followers, and the great *Imams*. I have a sincere regard for the work and achievements of Shah Waliullah and the Mujaddid and my love for them is in no way less than that of any of their followers. But this is the one thing about them which I have never been able to appreciate. As a matter of fact, I have never accepted anything from them because it had the support of their 'Divine inspirations' but because it was supported by strong argument or appeared to be reasonable and well–authenticated. Similarly I hold them to be *mujaddids* on account of the opinion that I have formed on the basis of their work and not on account of my belief in their claims.

Question :

I have studied your literature sincerely and honestly and in spite of being a follower of the Ahl–i–Hadith School regard myself an ordinary and humble worker of your Islamic Movement. I am also trying my best to make it popular among the people. Recently, however, I happend to read a few things regarding *Tasawwuf* and the practice of cherishing the image of *Shaikh* which have caused certain doubts to arise in my mind. You regard the non–Arab innovations in Religion as allowable, whereas the whole literature produced so far has been a strong protest against them. It will be agreed that the main objective of our Movement is to perform the duty of establishing true Religion. God forbid, if we toleratаed one innovation that will be tantamount to opening the flood–gate for all sorts of innovations into the Movement. Kindly consider my doubts and explain your viewpoint with regard to the reality of *Tasaw-*

wuf and the practice of cherishing the image of *Shaikh* in the light of the Quran and the *Sunnah*. I hope that necessary explanations will be published in the pages of the *Tarjuman-ul-Quran*.

Reply:

The misgivings caused by some one sentence of mine would not have arisen in your mind had you kept my other clearer statement on the subject in view. However, I shall now deal with your objections briefly and give a reply in as clear terms as possible.

1. *Tasawwuf* is not one particular defined thing, but many different things have come to be known by this name. there is a *Tasawwuf* that we confirm and support; there is a *Tasawwuf* that we reject and condemn; and there is a *Tasawwuf* that we want to reform and purify.

The first kind of *Tasawwuf* was prevalent in the earliest period of Islam and was practised by Sufis like Fuzail bin Ayaz, Ibrahim Adham, M'aruf Karkhi, etc. (may Allah bless them all with His mercy). It had no philosophy of its own and no separate and distinct way of life. It conception and ideas,its rites and practices had all been derived from the Quran and the *Sunnah*. It set the same object and ideal for life as has been set by Islam, viz., devotion to and contemplation of Allah: "And they are ordered naught else than to serve Allah, keeping religion pure for him." (98/5). We not only confirm this *Tasawwuf*, but want to revive and propagate it also.

The other *Tasawwuf* is that in which Greek and Stoic, Zoroastrian and Vedantic philosophies have got mixed up, which has incorporated monastic and yogic practices and customs and polytheistic ideas, which recognises the *Shariah, Tariqah,* and *M'arifah* as independent and more often contradictory aspects of life, and which aims at training man for quite different purposes than training him for his duties as Allah's vicegerent on the earth. This is the *Tasawwuf* we reject and condemn. It is essential to eradicate it as the other evils of the present day for the establishment of Allah's Religion.

Besides these, there is another *Tasawwuf* which has conjoined in it traits and features of both the first two kinds. The practices and ways of this *Tasawwuf* were initiated and propounded by some very righteous and pious men who were scholarly and noble minded but not altogether immune from the evil effects of the past and contemporary trends. They tried their best to understand the real *Tasawwuf* of Islam and cleanse it of the un–Islamic elements. But in spite of that their theories and concepts, their practices and customs could not remain wholly free from alien influence and the effects of un–Islamic mysticism. They thought that these were not repugnant to the teachings of the Quran and the *Sunnah*, or could be proved to be in conformity with them by interpretation. Moreover, the aims and ends of this *Tasawwuf* are more or less different from those desired and cherished by Islam. Neither does it aim at preparing man for his duties of Allah's vicegerency and making him a "witness unto mankind" in the words of the Quran, nor can it produce such men as may have a comprehensive view of Religion, and may also be qualified to establish it. We do not wholly approve of this *Tasawwuf*, nor wholly reject it. Our only request is that its followers and supporters should kindly make a critical appraisal of it, leaving aside their love and veneration for their spiritual heroes, in the light of the Quran and the *Sunnah*, and try to reform it. Moreover, if they find a person expressing a different opinion with regard to some aspect of this *Tasawwuf* because he finds it repugnant to the Quran and the *Sunnah* they should not refuse him the right of criticism and run him down simply because they do not happen to agree with his viewpoint.

2. As regards the propriety of cherishing the image of *Shaikh* it can be dealt with from two points of view: first, of the act by itself; second, of considering it as a means of attaining nearness to Allah.

In the first case the question is whether it is a lawful or an unlawful act, and this depends on the intention of the one who practises it. One intention is such[29] that the act cannot but be

29. For instance, of holding the *Shaikh* as worthy of worship.—Tr.

declared as prohibited; according to another no jurist can pronounce it as unlawful. It may be likened to the case of a person whom I find enjoying the beauty of some unfamiliar lady and on asking him he tells me that he is trying to satisfy his aesthetic taste. Obviously I would say that he is doing something unlawful. I find another person similarly engaged who tells me that he intends to marry the lady. In this case I shall have to pronounce that his act is not unlawful. For the reason that he gives for his act is justifiable from the *Shariah* point of view.

As to the other viewpoint, I have never been in doubt that the practice of cherishing the image of *Shaikh* is absolutely unlawful, no matter how high and revered are the names with whom it is associated. I say that Allah and His Prophet did not show any slackness in teaching us the ways and means of establishing relationship with Him. Then why should we not rest content with those ways and means and instead begin inventing new ones which may not only be doubtful in themselves but liable to lead easily into grave pitfalls?

It is misleading to raise here the question, why should permissible means be discarded in the matter of attaining nearness to Allah and purifying the soul when the adoption of such means has been allowed to achieve the ends of the *Shariah* in other matters ? This argument is basically wrong, for the two aspects of Religion—one of man's relationship with Allah, and the other of his relationship with other people and the world—are different in nature. As regards the first aspect we should depend only on those means and ways of worship as have been taught by Allah and His Prophet. We are not allowed to curtail them nor can we make additions on to them. For we do not possess any means of attaining Allah's *M'arifah* and of establishing relationship with Him except through the teachings of His Book and the *Sunnah* of His Prophet. Whatever change will be made in this regard will be tantamount to innovation and every innovation amounts to heresy. The principle that whatever is not prohibited is allowable cannot work here. On the contrary, the principle here is that whatever is not supported by the authority of the Quran and the *Sunnah* is innova-

tion. Even if something is derived by analogy it must have its basis in the Quran and the *Sunnah*. On the other hand, as regards the sphere of man's relationship with the other people and the world, we have been allowed a certain liberty of action. We should obey what has been ordained, refrain from what has been prohibited and use analogy in cases where nothing has been clearly ordained. Or if analogy is not possible, we should adopt and follow anything or any way that we find in accord with the spirit of the Islamic system. The reason why this freedom of action has been allowed in this sphere is that we possess rational and intellectual means of determining the wisdom or otherwise of our relations with other people to an extent that we can distinguish the Right from the wrong and the Good from the evil in the light of the guidance afforded by the Book of Allah and the *Sunnah* of His Prophet. This freedom of action, therefore, should be limited to this sphere only. It should not be extended to cover the affairs of the other sphere. For it is basically wrong to take anything not prohibited as allowable and invent or adopt from others new ways of establishing relationship with Allah. On this very account the Christians had invented monasticism which has been condemned in the Holy Quran.

(Tarjuman-ul-Quran, February, 1952)

IV. AN ALLEGATION REFUTED

Question :

It is being alleged that you claim yourself to be a *mujaddid* or the Mehdi, or are secretly trying to make the people believe you as such. What have you to say about this allegation ?

Reply :

This allegation has been refuted more than once in the pages of the Tarjuman-ul-Quran. Therefore, instead of giving a fresh reply I would like to reproduce the replies already given.

First of all Maulana Manazar Ahsan Gilani in 1941 kindly gave expression to his misgivings about me. In response to him I wrote in an article entitled "Clarification of Doubts":

"My bold statements might have given you the impression that I regard myself a 'big thing' and expect to attain some high position. The fact, however, is that my humble efforts in this regard are only meant to compensate for my sins. I am fully aware of my limitations. Therefore, not to speak of aspiring to any high position, if only I am spared of punishment in the Hereafter it will be quite beyond my expectations."

(Tarjuman–ul–Quran, September, October and November, 1941).

About the same time, Maulana Syed Suleman Nadavi, distorting one of my statements, gave it the meaning that I claimed to be a *Mujaddid*. I had, in fact, stated that my humble efforts were only an attempt to revive Religion. I wrote in response to this bare charge: "Calling any attempt an attempt at *Tajdid* does not imply that one who makes that attempt should be called a *Mujaddid* also, and not an ordinary one but the *Mujaddid* of his century. Laying a few bricks together to make a wall is no doubt a constructional activity, but does it imply that every bricklayer should be called an engineer, the engineer of the century. Likewise, if someone calls his work an attempt or effort at *Tajdid* when he is really working for that cause it will only be a statement of fact. It should not be construed to mean that he is making a claim to being a *mujaddid* and wishing to be recognised as the *mujaddid* of the century. People devoid of high ideals no doubt begin making high claims after carrying out a work of little or no consequence, or rather start work with claims, but it does not behoove a sensible person to engage himself in making claims instead of working earnestly for a cause. Many people in the Indo–Pak subcontinent and in the other parts of the world are busy working for the Revival of Islam and we regard the Maulana himself (the respectable objector) also as one of them. I have also tried in my humble way to work for the same cause, and now our religious organisation wants to serve it collectively. But indeed the real *mujaddid* will be he whose work and effort is blessed by Allah and who is actually able to achieve the high ideal of the Islamic Revival. For the real thing is neither a man's avowed claims nor his being

called a *mujaddid* by the world, but his passing away into the presence of his Master with such service to his credit as may earn him the title of *mujaddid* there. I pray that Allah may bless the *Maulana* with such a favour, and one would like the *Maulana* also to pray for others that Allah may grant them strength and ability to serve His Religion in that manner. I am pained to see that some Islamic terms have been unnecessarily made a taboo. Every now and then one finds that a person rises with the objective of reviving the Roman glory of the past and the worshippers of Romanism warmly welcome him; someone comes forth with a will to revive the Vedantic civilization and the worshippers of Hinduism back him up; another one expresses his determination to revive the Greek art and the worshippers of art give him the fullest support. But one wonders why the Revival of Allah's Religion only should be such an offence that one may feel shy of even mentioning it, and if someone expresses his intention to undertake it, the worshippers of Allah may try to castigate him and cry him down." (Tarjuman–ul–Quran, December 1951 and January–February 1952).

Even after these elucidations our religious scholars did not stop their propaganda. For among other weapons to arouse the people against me one necessary weapon was that I should be labelled with the charge of making a claim. Therefore, during 1945 and 1946 it was repeatedly alleged that I was out to lay a claim to 'Mehdi–ism'. On this I wrote in the June 1946 issue of the *Tarjuman–ul–Quran :*

"Those who are expressing such misgivings with a view to preventing people from listening to the call to the Truth raised by the *Jamaat–i–Islami* are rendering themselves exposed to a grievous punishment which I have decided to inflict on them and which they will never be able to avoid. The punishment is that, God willing, I will pass away into the presence of my Allah without making any claim, and there I shall see what plea these people put in before Him for creating these misgivings and thus preventing people from the Truth."

If these people had any fear of God or any belief in the Hereafter, they would not possibly have repeated the same

charge after such a warning from me as the one reproduced above. But you can see how boldly they are spreading and circulating it over again. After reading what I had written in this connection in the recent issues of the *Tarjuman-ul-Quran,* these people did not even so much as hesitate while uttering these charges. Verdict of the Hereafter is with Allah, but I wonder whether it is possible that our Ulema will ever win the honour and applause of this world by such activities as these.

It will be of interest to note that my book the "Revivalist Movement in Islam" some of whose sentences are being misconstrued with a view to misleading people, clearly contains my following words :

"None but a Prophet has any right to start his work with a claim, nor does any body except a Prophet know with certainty the nature of his mission. *'Mehdi-ism'* is not something to be achieved. Prophet who put forward such claims and those who readily accept them, in fact, betray a serious lack of knowledge and a depraved mentality."

People who are mis-representing excerpts from this book may be asked whether they have overlooked these words or are purposely trying to conceal them.

(Tarjuman-ul-Quran, September, 1951)

V. AL-MEHDI AND HIS PLACE IN ISLAM

Question 1 :

Your views about the coming of *Al-Mehdi* as contained in your "Revivalist Movement in Islam" are not wholly satisfactory. One may differ with you in so far as you do not believe in any special and distinctive signs for the recognition of the promised *Mehdi,* while a clear mention of these has been made in the Traditions. One wonders how you can overlook these Traditions.

Reply :

The Traditions with regard to the coming of the *Mehdi* have been subjected to so searching a criticism by the critics of

Hadith that one group of scholars no longer believes in the coming of the *Mehdi* at all. A close scrutiny of the reporters of such Traditions has shown that most of them were the Shiites. Moreover, history reveals that these Traditions have been exploited by various sects for their religious and political purposes and used by them in favour of one or the other of their particular condidate. In view of these facts I have come to the conclusion that as far as the prophecy about the coming of the *Mehdi* itself is concerned these Traditions are authentic, but in so far as they contain the details about specific signs and features they are invented, and the additions have most probably been made to them later by the interested parties. The literature produced by the people who falsely claimed to be the promised *Mehdi* at different times clearly shows that these very Traditions have provided material for their wicked designs and falsehoods.

As far as I have studied the prophecies made by the Holy Prophet, their manner and approach is never such that they would describe the details and specific signs of a coming event in the way these have been described in the Traditions concerning the *Mehdi*. The Holy Prophet generally gave the principal signs only of an event but as far as its details were concerned he would never describe them.

Question 2:

That the coming of the *Mehdi* is certain has been conceded in your "Revivalist Movement in Islam" but as regards his functions and duties these have been described in your own words without support from the authentic sources. These may kindly be described now in the light of Traditions. Moreover, nothing has been said about the position and special distinctions of the promised *Mehdi* as also about the obligation to obey and follow him, but he has been simply regarded as one among the common *mujaddids*. A *mujaddid* cannot be infallible, but the promised *Mehdi* according to common belief has to be innocent and infallible. In the presence of such a clear ground for distinction how can you place the *Mehdi* in the list of *mujaddids* ?

Reply :

The word *mehdi* as occurring in the Traditions means "the one rightly guided." Therefore, it may apply to any leader who is on the Right Path. *Al–Mehdi*, has been used for a special person who according to the Traditions will establish "Caliphate after the pattern of Prophethood" and will fill the earth with justice after these had been dislodged and disrupted. *Al* has been prefixed to *Mehdi* in order to distinguish him from others. But it is wrong to think that a special office has been created in Religion after the name of *Mehdi*, believing in whom and recognising whom may be as obligatory as believing in the Prophets and obeying and following whom as bindings as that of the Prophets for one's salvation and faith. Moreover, there is no ground in the Traditions for the idea that the *Mehdi* will be an innocent and infallible *Imam* . The conception of infallibility for people other than the Prophets is a purely Shi–ite conception which has absolutely no basis in the Quran and the *Sunnah*.

It should be once for all understood that the elucidation of the grounds on which depend one's belief and unbelief and one's salvation in the Hereafter is the responsibility of Allah and He has laid down all these in the Quran, not figuratively but with all possible clarity and precision. Allah Himself says: "As regards guidance, the responsibility is Ours." Therefore, any matter having such an importance in Religion must have its basis and proof in the Quran. This matter cannot be decided only by the Traditions which have reached men through other men. These can at the most afford probable truth, but not the authentic knowledge. Obviously, Allah would not have liked to put man to test by making him depend on the Traditions only in matters so important in His Religion as distinguish belief from un–belief. The very nature of such matters demands that they should be mentioned by Allah Himself in His Own Book so clearly as to leave no shadow of doubt. And the Messenger of Allah should have stressed them as the cardinal point of his prophetic mission, and made sure that they had been conveyed to each individual Believer.

Now as regards the *Mehdi,* his position in Islam does not seem to be such as to be essential for determining one's being Muslim and attaining salvation. Had he this position it would have been pointed out and elucidated with sufficient emphasis and clarity in the Quran. And the Holy Prophet would not have rested content with imparting it to a few of his Companions only, but would have done his best to convey this to the whole *Ummah.* He would have rather shown the same earnestness of purpose in preaching it as he did while preaching the Oneness of Allah and the reality of the Day of Judgement. As a matter of fact, a person who possesses some insight in the religious sciences cannot for a moment believe that a matter of such paramount importance in Religion might have been left to be determined by *Akhbar-i-Aahaad,* and these of such authenticity as scholars of Hadith of the status of Imam Malik, Imam Bukhari and Imam Muslim did not like to include in their Collections. (Tarjuman-ul-Quran, March, June 1945).

Question 3:

Some very pious and sincere persons have objected to your views about Imam Mehdi as found in your "Revivalist Movement in Islam" in the light of Traditions. I am sending these objections to you with the feeling that the *Shariah* values must be observed faithfully by those who undertake the task of establishing Islam. Therefore, it is essential that whatever you write must be in complete conformity with the *Shariah.* And if you happen to express a wrong opinion, you should not hesitate to recede from it.

Your views about Imam Mehdi as referred to above are in our opinion contrary to the Traditions. I have studied all the Traditions in this connection as contained in the Collections of *Hadith* by Tirmizi and Abu Daud and found that the reporters of some Traditions are really the Shi-ites or the Kharij-ites, but there are other Traditions also in the same books whose reporters are authentic. Such are the Traditions which go against your views. For instance, here is a Tradition of Abu Daud :

"Muhammad bin Al–Muthanna relates from Ummi–i–Salmah, wife of the Holy Prophet...."the Holy Prophet said that difference would arise on the death of a Caliph. Then a man from among the people of Madinah will come out and run towards Makkah. The Makkans will receive him and elevate him to the position of Amir and perform *bai'at* on his hand between *Al–Rukn* and *Al–Muqam.*"[30]

All the reporters of this Tradition are known to be authentic. Besides, there is another Tradition reported by Baihaqi and found in *Kitab–ul–Fitn* of *Mishkat.*

"Thauban reported that the Holy Prophet said : 'When you see black flags approaching from the side of Khurasan, receive them for among them will be Al–Mehdi, the vicegerent of Allah'."

These Traditions refute your view that *Al–Mehdi* will be unaware of his appointment as such. Especially the words :

"It is obligatory for every Muslim to help him or (said the Prophet) to respond to his call."

And the following words from a Tradition of Tirmizi are very explicit on the point :

"The Holy Prophet said that a man would come to him and say, '*O Mehdi*, give me, give me.' Then further said, 'The *Mehdi* will give him handful so as to fill his cloth with as much as he will be able to carry'."

2. You have written that the promised *Mehdi* will be a most modern leader... These words of yours are not supported by any Tradition. If they are, the authority may kindly be quoted. Those who possess views different from you have factual argument in their favour. They say that the *mujaddids* born so far in the *Ummah* have been from among the Sufis.

3. Your view that the *Mehdi* will be most modern leader is creating the impression that you yourself will claim to be the *Mehdi.*

30. *Al–Rukn* is that corner of the *Ka'abah* where the 'Black Stone' is fixed, and *Al–Muqam* means the 'place of Abraham' where prayer is offered after completing *tawaf* of the *Ka'abah.*—Tr.

4. *Ilamat–i–Qiyamat* (by Shah Rafi–uddin, translated by Maulvi Noor Muhammad) contains some Traditions about Imam Mehdi with reference to Muslim and Bukhari's Collections. Another Tradition in the same book says that while *bai'at* to the *Medhi* will be performed, a voice will be heard from the Heavens calling :

"This is Al–Mehdi, Allah's vicegerent. Listen to him and obey."

What is your research about this Tradition ?

Reply :

1. I have already given the conclusions of my research about Imam Mehdi as mentioned in the Traditions contained in various Collections. People who put their belief in Tradition simply because it occurs in a Collection of *Hadith,* or can go only so far on the path of research as to ascertain about the reporters whether they were authentic or not, may stick to their belief based on these Traditions. But the people who collect all such Traditions together, compare them and find contradictions in their contents, who are fully conversant with the whole history of conflict between the Ummayyids, the Abbasids and the Fatimids and who clearly see that there are several Traditions in favour of each party in the conflict and that most of the reporters were also openly connected with one or the other party, find it really difficult to accept as authentic all the details contained in these Traditions. The Traditions quoted by you, for instance, contain a reference to black flags, and according to history black flag was an emblem of the Abbasids. History also reveals that such Traditions were often quoted to establish Mehdi, the Abbasid, as the promised *Mehdi.* Now if some one insists on believing these things he may do so and may reject my views as expressed in the 'Revivalist Movement in Islam." It is not necessary that whatever view I express on any historical , religious and juristic subject should be equally acceptable to all people. Morever, it is wrong to think that if a person does not like my research on these subjects he should withdraw his co–operation from me in the task of establishing Islam. After

all, scholars have been differing before also in their views with regard to questions of *Hadith, Tafsir, Fiqh* etc.

2. My view that the *Mehdi* will be a most modern leader does not imply that he will shave his beard, dress up in European clothes and live in an up–to–date fashion. I only mean to suggest that he will be fully conversant with the arts and sciences of his age, with its conditions and requirements, and will use all scientific means and devices invented by it to the best advantage. This is all common sense and does not stand in need of confirmation by any authority. When the Holy Prophet himself made use of the devices of his age like trenches, battering–ram (*dabbabah*), mongonel (*manjaniq*) etc., how can one who will rise to do full justice to the performance of his mission remain unconcerned with tanks, aeroplanes and the other scientific means and necessities of his age ? And this is natural. For unless a party captures all the available means of power and makes use of all the existing arts and sciences, devices and techniques to propagate its influence, it cannot attain its objectives and dominance in general.

3. As regards the misgiving that I shall myself claim to be the Mehdi, I cannot help remarking that giving expression to such suspicions cannot be the pastime of a person who fears Allah, who holds himself answerable to Him and who remembers His clear command : "Avoid suspicions scrupulously, for some suspicions are sinful." Those who are expressing such misgivings with a view to preventing people from listening to the call of the Truth raised by the *Jamaat–e–Islami* are rendering themselves exposed to grievous punishment which I have decided to inflict on them and which they will never be able to avoid. The punishment is that, God willing, I will pass away into the presence of my Allah without making any claim, and there I shall see what plea these people put in before Him for creating these misgivings and thus preventing people from the Truth.

4. As to the Tradition related in *Ilamat–i–Qiyamat* I cannot say anything in favour of or aginst it. If the Holy

Prophet has really said that at time of *bai't* to the *Mehdi* a voice will be heard from the Heavens saying :

"This is Al–Mehdi, vicegerent of Allah, Listen to him and obey," then my view as expressed in the "Revivalist Movement In Islam" is not correct. But I do not expect that the Holy Prophet would have said such a thing. A study of the Quran shows that such call from the Heavens was never heard on the advent of any Prophet. Even on the occasion of the coming of our Holy Prophet who was to be the last of the Prophets and after whom mankind was not to get any more oppurtunity for determining the validity of belief or otherwise for it, such a call was not heard from the Heavnes. The polytheists of Makkah went on pressing their demand that the Prophet should be accompanied by an angel who should declare him to be Allah's Prophet, or he should have some other clear sign with him by which people might unmistakably know that he had really been sent by Allah as Prophet. But Allah rejected all these demands and explained in the Quran that laying reality bare as to leave no scope for the test of reason and judgement was against the Devine Wisdom. Now how can one believe that Allah will change His *Sunnah* in the case of Imam *Mehdi* only and at the time of his *bai'at* will get it announced from the Heavens :

"This is Al–Mehdi, Our vicegerent. Listem to him and obey." Tarjuman–ul–Quran, June, 1946)